

INFLUENCES OVER  
**AWAKENING**



**THE VISUAL EMOTIONS**

A PERSONAL ARCHITECTURAL PERCEPTION OF SPACE

# ABSTRACT

*Keywords: emotions, visual environment, cinematic space, architectural space, production designer*



This thesis analyses my production design process for *Awakening* (2015), an experimental short film directed and written by Moona Pennanen. Working as a production designer influenced my previous experience as an architect and challenged my perception and design of architectural space. I started to perceive the architectural space through emotions, connecting different structures to certain feelings. The design process allowed me to reflect on architectural space and brought new perspective to my understanding of space.

In this study, I focus on the impact of cinematic space on the observer and relate it to architectural space design. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest and growing need related to alternative methods of expression, communication and re-thinking the human relationship with built environment. Contemporary architecture practice is more and more influenced by other disciplines and film is one of them. The way space in cinema is perceived raises important aspects, which I try to bring forth in my current research.

The process of constructing cinematic space lies in the deliberate use of visual components, such as line, shape, tone, color, etc. The careful use and combination of components that emphasize the script, create the visual structure of cinematic space. Eventually space becomes an expressive power, a storyteller, that communicates moods and emotions.

Working with visual components to create cinematic space for *Awakening*, gave me the chance to better convey the main character's feelings and affect the viewer emotionally. Therefore the primary goal of this thesis is to raise awareness of the design process concerning a visual issues, which I bring forth in this study. These visual elements have an impact on the audience, the observer and the filmmaker, hence I regard these elements decisively noteworthy. The main part of the work analyses the design process for *Awakening*, including an interview with the director Moona Pennanen.

My background as an architect gave me the possibility to bring the knowledge of architectural space and cinematic space together and connect them to the idea of Visual Emotions encoded in space. The challenge in the design process was to implement ideas of space with consideration to feelings, atmospheres, memories and emotional sensibility. In other words, I endeavored to create a visual space that has the potential to transfer a certain emotion and to perform a powerful role.

The idea of *Awakening* - The Visual Emotions creates opportunities for experimentation and finding new methods of expression while working with space. At the same time it, embraces the relationship between space, architecture and the human being. The thesis contributes to the growing research awareness in the field of architectural practice through understanding and controlling the visual components in film design. It uses production design and film vocabulary as tools for experimenting with space as well as a framework for addressing the future thinking of architectural space as an visual environment emotionally impacting the observer.











# **AWAKENING - THE VISUAL EMOTIONS**

**INFLUENCES OVER A PERSONAL ARCHITECTURAL  
PERCEPTION OF SPACE**

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# INTRODUCTION



I am an architect and an urban designer graduated in Poland and a construction architect graduated in Denmark. I worked as an architect for five years in Denmark and Northern Ireland. My experience ranges from designing small scale single family houses to big scale residential, office and retail buildings around Europe, including Denmark, Lithuania, Northern Ireland, France and Poland.

Film is a source of inspiration for me. My adventure with cinema started in Poland, where I participated in several film productions for Warsaw Film Studio WFDiF (*Los Numeros* 2011, *Sztos II* 2012, *Fusball* 2012). Through that experience, I realized how diverse the work of production designer is and, at the same time, how closely connected to architect profession it is. In my previous study and practice I used to focus on human relationship with built environment. For me, architectural design and the way any built physical space influences the inhabitant was, and still is, the most interesting part about architecture. My film experience led me to production design studies, where I discovered the cinematic perspective of the relationship between human and physical space.

I studied production design for three years in ELO Aalto University. During that time I designed several films: *Influentia* (2012), *Gravity* (2013), *Spheres of being* (2013) – dance theater, *Awakening* (2015).

I met with Moona Pennanen, the director of the film I will write about, on the film set of *Psyko-poesis* (2012), one of the ELO productions. In one year she contacted me regarding her upcoming experimental documentary production - *Awakening*. From the beginning we knew that the production design for *Awakening* will be limited in scope and costs. I was mainly asked to select urban and nature locations for the film; nevertheless, I decided to take part in this project. The experimental format and the strong emotional content of the film encouraged me to put emphasis on the visual representation revealing the relationship between character and physical space.

The quality of a physical space(1) and the designed environment is very essential for me as an architect. In architecture this quality is achieved by light, sound, colors, materials, texture, forms, etc., considering the future inhabitant. The relationship the architecture can establish with the inhabitant is very inspiring for me. I try to look in my practice for these elements, ideas, structures that make people appreciate the environment they live in, even influence them, make them happy or sad, let them experience architecture with all their senses, sometimes even interact with space. Unfortunately, contemporary architecture design, in many cases concentrates mainly on esthetics, geometry and functionality. As an architecture student I was taught to compose space as an abstract form, a shape spreader on the drawing board or the computer. This approach to space made me think conceptually about space, but at the same time it distanced me from the actual knowledge of how people feel and understand physical space.

Having the possibility to observe and assist on a few film productions in Poland and the chance to study in ELO, Aalto in Finland, I intuitively directed my attention towards the use of physical space in cinema. During my studies I learned how to use space to tell the story, how space through the film image can represent the emotions of characters. For me, as an architect, this experience opened a new perspective on the design subject and professionally drove me towards exploring and experimenting with architecture using film as a medium.

After half a year of my studies in Aalto, I organized and tutored Poetry of Wastelands workshop, for the Helsinki World Capital of Design. Listening, observing, and interacting with post-industrial, Kalasatama district in Helsinki, was the main idea behind the workshop. The international group of architecture and design students, used film as a medium to capture their emotional experience while exploring transforming architecture of wastelands. Recently, I lectured a second edition of the workshop, entitled Sensing Space, at the Department of Scenography and Production Design in Aalto University. This time the architectural observation was portrayed in a sketchier cinematic format, like taking a walk, driving a bike, wandering around the Helsinki area.

Interestingly, both ideas and experiments gave me the chance not only to draw the close link between architectural space influencing the inhabitant and cinematic space influencing the audience, but also and foremost they led me to realize that film is an excellent example of treating space in emotional way through creating moods and atmospheres endowed with the capacity to evoke certain feelings in the observer through the cinematic space. This experience pushed my research further and opened the possibility to investigate the film visual structure as a deliberate composition of visual elements.

Bruce Block's book *The Visual Story* (2006) let me to understand the importance of the components that create the film image - the visual elements. According to Block, space is one of the basic visual element, and along with line, shape, tone, color, movement etc. it delineates actors, locations, props, costumes and scenery in the film image. The role of space in cinema can be compared to the role of an actor, where the actor performs a character and the space plays a visual character.

The idea of space as a key visual component communicating moods and emotions through the film image and its capacity to emotionally affect the viewer helped me to understand how to design architectural space by considering the inhabitant's feelings.

The main difference between architectural space and cinematographic space for me is that we experience architecture in a three-dimensional space, whereas the cinematic space is two-dimensional. Nevertheless, the essential elements that construct architectural and cinematic space are similar. Block's writings let me structure and relate architectural elements to cinematic visual elements and combine this knowledge in the design process for *Awakening*.

Another difference in understanding architectural and cinematic space is about structure and functionality. These aspects of space are not always important in cinema, but very essential in architecture. The architectural space is made for living, while cinematic space together with story and sound creates alive (moving) film image.

I think about architecture in terms of events in space: moments, memories and stories in space. Space in cinema gives that possibility too; it shows the relationship between people and events, spaces, objects. For me as an architect, it is of interest to explore this relationship. This exploration adds important knowledge to the structural and functional aspects of the architect's profession.

This thesis studies the cinematic space functioning as a storyteller in the film *Awakening*. I investigate the visual communication and components that I use in order to represent the character's emotions through the film space of *Awakening*. In order to analyze the production design for the film, the main research question of '**how to use space to tell the story**', and more specifically, '**how space can represent the emotions of the characters through the film image**', emerged.

In this work I focus on the production design process for the film and the way it transformed my previous experience as an architect. As a production designer and architect, I believe it is very important to better understand the meaning and the functions of the cinematic space and the emotional content that it can perform.

Throughout this thesis, there are several key terms distinguishing architecture and film relation with space.

In architecture, space is one of the key building components along with structure, light, sound, material, geometry etc., and at the same time it is the final product - **the architectural space**.

In cinema, visuals together with story and sound are the key building elements of cinema's final product – **the film image**(2). Bruce Block defines space in cinema as a one of the basic visual components along with line, shape, tone, color, movement and rhythm, which build the film image. Additionally, space according to Block defines the screen where all the other visual components are seen(3).



For me as an architect, space in cinema is a combination of all those visual components mentioned above, rather than a separate, monolithic component on its own. It is natural for me to understand space in cinema as an environment, a setting built through the interaction of the visual components.

Therefore, in this work I will treat the cinematic space as a the key building component of the film image. In that way the **cinematic space** is not straightforwardly defined, but its meaning and the emotions it carries come through all the characteristic of the other visual elements.

This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge on perception of cinematic space and its relation to architectural space. **Awakening - the visual emotions** examines the emotional aspect of cinematic space.

Space in film not only visualizes the character's environment and gives references where they live and what they do, who they are, and so on. It also and foremost communicates their feelings and the overall story of their lives. The character's emotions can evoke strong feelings in us as viewers, e.g. we can feel happy or sad, and these are provoked by the space we see on screen. Cinematic space derives feelings and emotions, which help the viewer to understand the picture in a better way. The thesis analyzes design for film as a tool for working with cinematic space, as well as a framework for addressing the future thinking of architectural space that can actively generate emotions.

The thesis is divided in four chapters. The first chapter, **The Visual Emotions** explains the main concept behind the thesis and brings architectural and production design point of view on the subject of space.

The second chapter, **The Script and the Creative Team** analyses the key themes from the script that influenced the production design. It brings to the picture the director's, who is also the scriptwriter, the producer's, the director of photography's, and the sound designer's point of view.

The third chapter, **Designing Space for *Awakening*** discusses the design process and the visual structure of the film space, as constructed through visual components, such as line, shape, color, pattern, movement.

The final chapter, **Conclusion** reflects on the findings and my experience regarding the production design process for *Awakening*.

Casa Malaparte



# METHODOLOGY



To create the space design for *Awakening*, I prepared in various ways. I looked closely at how architecture - nature – emotions might intersect in the design process for Pennanen's film. Firstly, I conducted style analysis of the film opening image, the *Angelus Novus* (Klee, 1920) to create a vocabulary of geometric shapes, which the image suggested.

Secondly, I used the shapes, the geometric elements and qualities found in *Angelus Novus* for building various spaces and visuals, which served to create the atmospheres in the film. My literature research consisted of Walter Benjamin's writings on *Angelus Novus*, Bruce Block's book *The Visual Story*(2007). I also took inspiration from Yayoi Kusma's installation *Infinity mirrored room*(2013) and Mark Rothko *no.14*(1956) and *no.61 Rust and blue*(1951). Moreover, I selected different artist's pictures which reinforced the metaphorical and emotional meaning of the cinematic space, supported by the particular properties of the visual components.

Along with the analysis of the design, I reflected on my previous architectural practice. After the film editing, I interviewed the film director to comment the ideas about the cinematic space in *Awakening* and analyzed my observations on the design process. The methods listed above often intertwined and various aspects of my creative process would often take place simultaneously, feeding into and from each other.

## LITERATURE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Architecturally and cinematically lines exist in physical space, for example as a result of the intersection of planes, like room corners. According to Block, line and shape are the visual components of film, along with space. For me, architectural and cinematic spaces are built through line and shape as a result of our perception. We tend to focus on edges, contours of three-dimensional spaces and objects and simplify them into lines and shapes.

As was pointed out in the introduction of this thesis, Block defines cinematic space as one of the basic visual elements that composes the visuals for the film image(4).

I decided to treat cinematic space as a visual environment, rather than a basic visual element. This visual environment stands above the other visual elements and is a place, where film visuals are generated. In the other words, cinematic space is an environment where visuals, sound and story take place and together create the film image.

There are similarities in the way we perceive **depth and flatness in space** on the two-dimensional screen and in the three-dimensional space we live in. For example, the human eye perceives space in depth, when exposed to the perspective of a street with height and width of buildings. On the contrary, perception of space flatness happens when the human eye is exposed to the frontal plan or a facade of a building. Strictly speaking, **architectural perspective** creates depth and illusion of narrowing all the parallel lines (vanishing point) in three-dimensional space. (This is only an illusion of narrowing and the way human eye perceive depth in physical space. In reality the parallel lines (parallel buildings) never come to one vanishing point) On the contrary, **perspective in cinema** is a illusion of depth, creating illusion of deep space on a flat film image.

Block classifies cinematic perspective as a most important depth cue in space; the illusion of depth on a flat screen. In my design, I used perspective as a third visual element, rather than a depth cue. I distinguished two basic types of perspective: **linear perspective**(5) creating sense of depth and **frontal perspective**(6) creating sense of flatness in cinematic space. Linear perspective is characterized with sense of depth and it can be achieved by depth of field, vanishing point or points, **aerial perspective**(7). Frontal perspective has opposite characteristics.

In general, perspective in cinema creates different types of spaces, like deep, flat, open, closed, ambiguous etc(9). Also, colors, tones and patterns can create a feeling of depth or flatness in cinematic space. Therefore I will treat them as perspective's visual subcomponents, along with the different types of space.

To design the film spaces I created juxtapositions or similarities between the past and the present, natural and architectural spaces by using different visual components.

The main principle governing my design work for *Awakening* was the principle of **contrast and affinity**, introduced by Block. The author points that contrast (difference) or affinity (similarity) in the visual components can intensify or decrease visual intensity, or dynamics in the film. By visual intensity and dynamics, Block understands the choice of visual components with relations to viewer's emotional reactions. In other words, the visual components, that creates cinematic space, can make audience happy, sad, tense or relax, etc.(10). The emotional impact that visual environment can have on a viewer, is what interest me as an architect and I decided to examine those findings in practice, designing *Awakening*.

My understanding of the environment inhabited by the character of the film was influenced and guided by Block's suggested method of manipulating visual components. To build cinematic space atmosphere and communicate emotions experienced by character, I followed Block method(11) and created linear sketches basing them on the visual analysis of **Angelus Novus**. Inspired by the painting technique, I used the sketches to support my visual interpretation of character's struggle and to represent it by linear motive in the cinematic space.

The turning point for the thesis is the interview with Pennanen (Appendix3). The conversation with the director, gave me understanding that the character's emotional content in cinematic space can influence not only audience, but also the director working in the visual environment. Experiencing the cinematic space not only through the picture on the screen, but in real, as a built or existing location had impact on Pennanen while directing the film. The locations **"...gave us ideas what could the main character do there, how she could observe the space. Some of the feelings she had were stemming from the location. My directing goal was to get the main character to listen the space, feel the space, and touch the space like it was another person, another actor, perhaps. I like the spaces to be also ambivalent not just representing only one thing"**, reveals Pennanen.

The analysis of production design for *Awakening*, my own film design and architectural practice, let me construct an assumption that emotions can play an essential role in constructing space both in cinema and in architecture. My hypothesis on several aspects, describe above, which relay on my personal understanding, acquired through production design studies and architectural experience.

# THE VISUAL EMOTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the idea behind **Visual emotions** and the way cinema and architecture can perform emotions in space. To support the concept, I recall literature and examples from different disciplines challenging the perspective on architecture, as well as on alternative design methods in architecture practice.

Working with production design for films made me realize that existing locations or built sets, occasionally play active role in cinema and can lead the film story on equivalent level as a main character. The film theoretician André Bazin addressed the ability of film to use cinematic space as a character. **“The human being is all-important in the theatre (film). The drama on the screen can exist without actor. A banging door, a leaf in the wind, waves beating on the shore, can heighten the dramatic effect. Some film masterpieces use a man only as an accessory, like an extra, or in counterpoint to nature, which is the true leading character(12).”**

Bazin’s idea serves as the main support for the thesis concept and is the central idea behind the production design for *Awakening*, where nature and architecture are vital to the story.

Additionally, Bruce Block compares the visual components (space as the number one component that creates structure to the film image), to a cast of characters, which communicates moods, emotions and meaning of the film image to the audience(13). Following writing and my own observation in architectural practice may support the idea that there is a strong link between cinematic space influencing the audience and architectural space influencing the viewer. Unfortunately, there is not enough practice and knowledge in architecture profession on how to implement that phenomena.

A current neuroscience study found that people spend eighty five percent of their lives inside architecture(14). Moreover, the shape of architectural space, the ambience, the atmosphere, is impacting inhabitants and can change their feelings, behavior, and what is most important, their brain. In the series *The Secret Life of Buildings*, Tom Dyckhoff explores the

architectural design impact on human. In one of the episodes Dyckhoff visits the Salk Institute in San Diego, to meet Professor Fred Gage, the scientist who has made the first direct connection between the development of the human brain and the nature of the places in which people spend their daily lives. Based on an experiment of exposing two mice in two different environments (the one constant and color limited, the other dynamic and colorful), the scientist states that architects are making impact on the structure of the human brain. He proved that space challenges our brain cells and the brain is a living substance that can increase its activity influenced by the space to which it is exposed too, says Gage(15). This research further supports the idea that architecture can be more than a shelter and structure for human life; it has emotional qualities that relates it to cinematic space.

Pallasmaa defines the issue of traditional architecture approach to design and underlines the importance of architecture impact on human existence. The architect points, that **“Architecture is usually analyzed and taught as a discipline that articulates space and geometry, but the mental impact of architecture arises significantly from its image quality that integrates the various aspects and dimensions of experience into a singular, internalized and remembered (memorized) entity(16) ”.**

Unsurprisingly, in his book *The Architecture of Image - Existential Space in Cinema*, Pallasmaa's main argument is, that cinema and architecture are closer to each other than any other art form, because both disciplines articulate lived space(17). Architect focuses on space experience as a key to human imagination. Central to the understanding of the space experience is the phenomenological acceptance of the human capacity to identify with objects and places. The key to communication between the living environment and human, lay in a human identification with physical space. That relation between architectural space and human being is intuitively grasped by film directors(18), according to Pallasmaa.

**“Relating a person to the whole world: that is the meaning of cinema(19).”**

Film has the amazing capacity to move us to experience the space on emotional level, and like architecture it expresses living space. Pallasma is proposing to expand the emotional content of architectural spaces through “the architecture of cinema (that) utilizes the entire range of emotions, and the touching architecture of Andrey Tarkovski’s films(20)”, could serve as a base for that exploration.

Tarkovsky is one of the greatest directors, that designed his own sets. The cinematic space of his films is portrayed as visual and sensual and has a metaphoric dimension. For example, in one of his film’s *Stalker* (1982), Tarkovsky uses nature and industrial architecture to portrait oppressed human mind and the need to reach the imaginary space of deepest wishes.



Still from *Stalker*



## ATMOSPHERE

Another architect, Peter Zumthor, like Pallasmaa, has an emotional understanding towards architectural profession. Even though it is not directly linked with cinematic experience, Zumthor tries to construct architecture through emotions.

For him “The artistic value of great architecture is not in its material existence, but the images and emotions that it evokes in the observer(21).” Zumthor is a master of atmosphere in architecture. In his poetic essays *Atmospheres and Thinking Architecture*, he talks about the power and essence of architectural space in communicating with human feelings and minds. The author states that buildings can possess strong presence, a personality, and a character(22). His approach to the design process is very sensual: “ **When I concentrate on a specific site or place for which I am going to design a building, when I try to plumb its depths, its form, its history, and its sensuous qualities, images of other places start to invade this process of precise observation: images of places I know and that once impressed me, images of ordinary or special places that I carry with me as inner visions of specific moods and qualities; images of architectural situations, which emanate from the world of art, or films, theater or literature(23).**” In the second essay, Zumthor indicates that the architectural existence is a surrounding of human life, the place where one grows up. For him the capability of architecture to evoke memory in human mind, as an image, emotion, feeling, mood, or love, is the most powerful feature of space representation(24). In similar way, the *Awakening's* character, experienced cinematic space, as an emotional journey through memories embodied in the space.

One of the most sublime representations of architecture constructed through memories and emotions, serving also as a character and location in film is *Casa Malaparte*. The house is known as *Casa come me*; a home of the writer and artist, Curzio Malaparte. After unsuccessful collaboration with an architect, the writer decided to design the house by himself. The main inspiration for him were the steps of the church on the island, where Malaparte was imprisoned. Sheer cliffs over Mediterranean Sea created thrilling setting for the house, composed as a monolith form, similar to a bunker. The building's most distinguishable feature is the stair case leading to the edgeless platform of roof terrace. The absence of any balustrades or handrails along the stairs, induces sensations of flying or fear of falling. The

stairway is simultaneously part of the cliff and part of the house with a breathtaking view over the sea. Dangerous and absurd, the building is said to represent the owner taste for the subversive and surreal as much as reflection on his time spend in prison. Malaparte regularly used shocking imagery, horror and revulsion in his writing, so the house is seen as an expression of its owners personality - A house like me. In Jean-Luc Godard's film *Le Mépris* (Contempt, 1963), the house becomes one of the main characters and serves the film dramaturgy. The film portrays the ending marriage of the two main characters. This event is embodied in the architectural form and space of Casa Malaparte. Through the camera lens, the house becomes a character expressing their relationship, imprisoned, falling and being on the edge. Godard's film drama made *Casa Malaparte* known outside the architectural profession as **“simply, the most beautiful house in the world(25) “**. Malaparte's unconventional thinking and emotional relationship to the project allowed him to create a house that can neither be classified by any architectural movement, nor by a particular design philosophy. Yet it is recognized as a masterpiece of modern architecture, and until today inspires filmmakers and artists.

Moreover, the growing number of architecture film festivals in recent years, is an fascinating phenomena on the contemporary increasing interest between cinema and architecture. The *Copenhagen Film Architecture Festival* is one of them and the aim of this year's edition was to explore the architectural influence on human lives, world and vice-versa; to extend the idea of what architecture is and can be. According to the organizers, the architecture is much more than bricks; architecture is sensual, physical and broadly present in human live(26). The film topics of the festival vary from contemporary architecture problems, like *Human Scale*(27), to experimental and interactive *Insitu*(28) touching the core of the human relationship with the city, through interventions in urban space.

Keeping in mind Gage's discovery on the architecture impact on human brain, Pallasmaa's studies about film's impact on senses and the close connection between cinema and architecture, along with Zumthor's emotional architecture design, rising general interest between both practices, I look closer at production design for *Awakening*, by using the basic visual components as characters building the cinematic environment.

# **THE SCRIPT AND THE ARTISTIC TEAM**

## THE SCRIPT

*Awakening* is a short experimental fiction essay, with autobiographical elements written and directed by Moona Pennanen. The shooting took place in the surroundings of Lohja, Finland at the end of September 2014, and after the first editing it continued in May 2015.

It took Pennanen almost two years to create the final version of the script. The story structure underwent a variety of changes that impacted the development of the production design and the ideas about cinematic space. Moreover, the director, that was also the scriptwriter, the director of photography and the sound designer, imposed certain necessities, and I will reflect on them in this chapter.

The first draft of the script was based on *Aamun kirkastus* (2012), a book by Mika Pekkola, exploring the life of a young girl raised in a strict religious community in Finland. In the beginning the script related to the theme of love versus hate and revenge as feelings experienced by the girl. The story revolved around many characters from a religious community and her family members. Later, it developed into a personal, internal struggle of a young person, raised by a strong bond of Christianity. This story was closely connected to Pennanen's childhood.

In the final version, *Awakening* took a shape of an overtly personal short essay, built through the voice over of a girl, enriched with poetic, abstract images of nature. The film producer, Helen Vinogradov imagined *Awakening* “as a visually different and memorable, story-wise philosophical and somewhat thoughtful audiovisual piece (Appendix 4)”.

## CHARACTER AND PHYSICAL SPACE

As a starting point I would like to introduce the main and the only character of *Awakening*: an eighteen-year-old girl Miina, who recalls her memories as a six-year-old child. At first we get familiar with Miina as a child and the conflict of her belief, after experiencing traumatically her grandfather's death. *Awakening* is portraying the feeling, which overwhelms the little child when she tries to understand the concept of death for the first time. Following that, Miina is seen as a teenage girl, searching her own religious beliefs and existential foundation. The burning cross and the teenage Miina in the field in the middle of the night is the climax of the film. After living through a strong struggle between her religious belief and the death of her grandfather, Miina turns to nature to find her own holy experience and answer. The forest is a resolution of her internal battle, the place where she finds herself, her new belief and freedom from nightmares.

*Awakening* was composed by two time periods of Miina's life. The script division into five parts revealed that the past and the present are constantly intersecting in time and that imposed the need to visually distinguish those periods.

**Prologue** opens with a quote of Walter Benjamin (scene 1), **Part 1** introduces teenage Miina dancing in the rock concert (scene 3) and interior of her childhood room (scene 12). Moreover, **Part 2** exposes cruel images of Judgment Day from church paintings (scene 13) and transforms the images to the field scene of burning cross (scene 15). **Part 3** comes back to childhood room where little Miina is praying (scene 21) and eventually returns to teenage Miina slow motion dance in the rock concert (scene 24). The story resolves in the **Epilogue** with young Miina sitting in the forest altar (scene 28).

Those five parts mentioned above are represented by key events that I extracted from the script and listed below.

## **Prologue**

1 Paul Klee: Angelus Novus (1920)

A storm is blowing from Paradise with such violence that the Angel's wings can no longer be closed. - Walter Benjamin

## **Part 1**

3 INT. NIGHT. GIG PLACE.

Short flashes of MIINA (18) in a rock concert. Different colored lights flash.

12 INT. EVENING. MIINA'S HOME. MIINA'S BEDROOM.

Small details from Miina's room. The aquarium, where the flower is. Angel painting hanging from the wall. Nigh lamp glowing blueish light. Little children's bible on the night table. MIINA (6) is sleeping with a toy deer. Small figurines (children's tableau later on).

## **Part 2**

13 INT. DAY. CHURCH.

Wall paintings of hell in the church. A creature is swallowing people. People are floating in pieces. People are having a feast with devils. Ash is raining from the sky.

15 EXT. DUSK. MIINA'S HOME. FIELD.

A cross on fire in the middle of a field. MIINA(18) is watching it burn in her nightgown.

## **Part 3**

21 INT. DAY. MIINA'S HOME. HER BEDROOM. (ALTERNATIVE CHURCH)

Little MIINA (6) is praying to God.

24 INT. NIGHT. GIG PLACE

MIINA (18) is dancing in a rock concert in slow motion.

## **Epilogue**

28 EXT. DUSK. FOREST ALTAR.

MIINA (18) is looking at the forest altar. (360°)

Additionally, the plot is situated in two types of locations - in **architecture and nature**.

Miina's childhood takes place in the countryside, where the locations are limited to her bedroom, the surroundings of the house and the local church. The childhood rural environment appears in opposition to urban architecture in her teens. As the story progresses we follow teenage Miina to more crowded and urban areas; a punk concert, railway passageways and tracks. Eventually the teenager returns to the natural environment, where the story resolves; an isolated cave, a stream, a forest. The director's choice of spaces in the script imposed the necessity to **build contrast or affinity between architecture of countryside, urban environment and nature locations**. In the Design chapter I will look closer at my artistic decisions regarding relationship between those locations.

## **SPACE ATMOSPHERE**

The script was filled with different space setups and props such as flashing colored lights in the rock concert, dark forest, structure of soil, tree branches, varied insect species (worms and beetles), empty cave, moist walls, light gleaming on the walls, details of running water in the stream.

The childhood room was the most accumulated space with symbolic objects such as an aquarium with a flower, a painting of an angel, a night lamp glowing bluish light, small saint figures and a children's bible on the night table, Miina's doll buried in the field.

There was a sensual connection between Miina as a child touching the hay moving in the wind, and the image of a burning cross when she was a teenage girl. The soft flames observed by Miina in the field created affinity with her childhood organic environment. In contrast to soft organic forms, geometrical wall paintings of hell in the church portrayed symbolic creatures swallowing people, human bodies floating in pieces and ashes raining from the sky.

These details had a strong impact on the building up of space atmosphere. They supported magic in Miina's childhood, interrupted by darkness that eventually changes into bright young life.





Figure 1. Picture of location before building set; Sketches of Miina room.

Miina's room relates to her childhood memories. The interior space is the only set constructed from a scratch and built on location (not in studio). The script did not reveal details of the room style and the childhood house. During the location scouting, artistic team and I, came across a two-story yellow countryside house in Lohja with spacious wooden mansard roof structure, situated in a neighborhood of fields and a lake. The house was abandoned and the attic was in a rough structural shape with no cladding on the floor and the walls. For a rural location the architecture of the house was quite massive. Pennanen imagined the place of Miina's home as more suburb, town setting.



Nevertheless, I introduced the idea of a spacious, attic interior, a cozy but vast room with a touch of past feelings, to embrace the atmosphere of magical childhood memories (Figure 1). As kids we perceive the surrounding world in a more extended, grander scale and so does Miina, when she recalls her childhood memories. The attic was about three meters high, equipped with four massive windows, generously letting the light inside. Due to the limited budget, I decided to work on forty sq. meters out of hundred and twenty sq. meters area of the attic including an inclined roof structure. In the design, I focused on the sleeping area with a bookstand structure built around the existing roof support. Timber shelves exposed props, books, flowers in a round aquarium, and glass blocks with insects that come alive in Miina's nightmares. I created an oversized dark tone sleeping cat mascot to articulate the feeling of strangeness and uniqueness of the childhood environment.

## **FROM BLACK AND WHITE TO COLOR**

In the beginning the film was intended to be in black and white to compliment the theme of nightmare visions and nature's abstract images. However, that aesthetic choice created a risk for the viewer understanding the film in a very "black and white" way. Even so, when looking at the reference images selected by Pennanen (Figure 2), I observed beauty and complexity of the grey tones in the images portraying nature. I could see potential in contrasting sharp black and white colors with a subtle grey palette. I saw the black and white colors symbolizing the strict religious community surrounding Miina, while the grey tones were the subtleties of life that Miina wanted to experience. In the end these thoughts were not given a chance to be further elaborated as the film was chosen to be shot in color. The concept of colors, tone and texture, I will bring further in the next chapter.



Figure 2. Pennanen reference pictures for first version of *Awakening* (2014)



## SOUND AND CINEMATOGRAPHY

The sound designer Meri Tikkala's understanding of scale in architecture and nature aroused my interest, as she planned to use vocally and acoustically voluminous nature, cave, and church spaces and juxtapose them with the micro-cosmos of insects living in forest ground or corners of the house. In relation to her idea, I worked with the contrast of big and open space versus small and closed one. I used the scale of space and objects to create a feeling of claustrophobia or freedom. In addition, Tikkala had a vision to infringe quiet and familiar sound structure with noise music, to portray the challenging co-existence of the spiritual and the material world. That idea helped me to build a relationship between nature and architecture, where I tried to look for subtle nuances and differences in both types of spaces.

Also for the cinematographer, Markus Tynskä, the nature in *Awakening* had a crucial, detailed role in shaping the events, the atmosphere and the narrative. Tynskä decided to work with a wide frame to empower the scale of nature and to emphasize the fear and the character's lost presence in space. According to Block the wide aspect ratio 2,40:1, which Tynskä used, emphasizes the feeling of loneliness in space and allows the viewer to wander(29). The choice of anamorphic lens and wide angle underlines horizontal attributes of space, but on the other hand limits the vertical ones. In architectural space, height is a very important attribute in relation to scale. The affinity between the height of trees and the main nave of the church for me was a central design feature. Unfortunately, Tynskä's choice and the fact that the church scene was eventually cut out from the shooting, forced me to look for different solutions in order to express verticality in space.

This chapter indicates that the creative team of *Awakening* imposed on me certain ideas and needs that I had to take into consideration later in the production design. The director, the producer, the cinematographer and the sound designer impacted the design process; guiding, inspiring and occasionally challenging. In architecture, on many occasions, I had to consider the ideas of a design team, including the client, structural and mechanical engineers etc. However, the role of an architect in a design process is more related to directors or script writer's position in a film. The architect creates the architectural script with in the space that is given to him, designs the story and the architectural characters. For the construction and the problem solving part he might receive help from the creative team.

The next chapter moves on to discuss artistic decisions imposed by *Awakening's* creative team in relation to cinematic space.





# DESIGNING FOR AWAKENING



## MIINA'S CINEMATIC SPACE

The aim of my design for *Awakening* was to find visual representations portraying the relation between Miina's story and the physical space. Like in architecture we often relate to space we are in. Physical space can help us to find relief, happiness or can intensify fear or anger. For example, when I am in search of calmness I go to vast, vertical room of gothic church or green expanse of the forest. On the contrary when I am angry, I search for the roughness of urban areas or the brutality of industrial architecture.

The film's experimental format and the lack of dialogues gave me a unique possibility to use cinematic space and express the character's emotions through it.

Miina's story is built through a feeling of fear and confusion, along with childhood believes and necessities to reach a rational understanding of life after experiencing the loss of a family member.

The key emotions that I wished to express through cinematic space are:

CHILDHOOD:	faith,	doubt,	fear.
TEENAGE:	confusion,	anger,	relief, balance.

According to Block, different types of space have different emotional characteristics associated with them. For example, perspective in space gives dynamism and intensity, whereas the lack of it turns space into something more calm and balanced(30).

In my design for *Awakening*, I searched for those different characteristics, but also how I could relate them to each other. It is the idea and the way space is combined within a visual structure that makes it emotionally powerful for the viewer(31)





FAITH  
DOUBT  
FEAR

CONFUSION  
ANGER  
RELIEF  
BALANCE



## THE KEY INSPIRATION - ANGELUS NOVUS

Water Benjamin's quote: **"The storm is blowing from Paradise with such violence that the Angel's wings can not longer be closed(32)"**, and Paul Klee's painting of Angelus Novus (Figure 3), are the opening elements in the prologue of *Awakening*. Benjamin interprets Klee's artwork as a struggle of an angel suffering from an accumulation of events that eventually cause a catastrophe. Ultimately, a force of nature saves the angel from destruction and directs him towards a new beginning. Pennanen's decision to begin *Awakening* with this particular image, accompanied by the description of an angel's battle in a storm, perfectly corresponded to the dramatic events in Miina's childhood, her battle with faith and a life transition from pain to relief.

**"A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, and his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress(33)"**

- Walter Benjamin.





Figure 3. Paul Klee, Angelus Novus (1920)

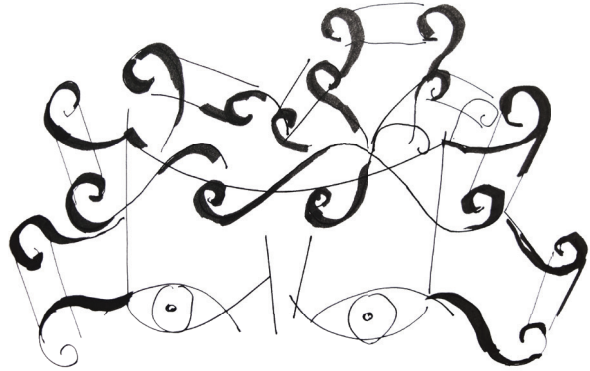
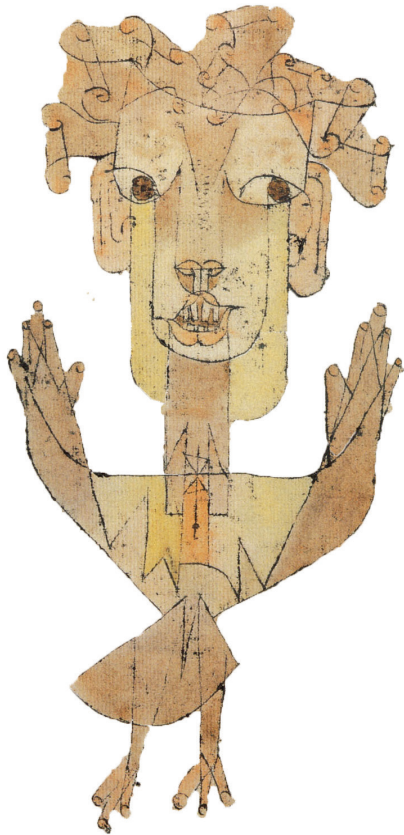


Figure 4 . Sketches of Angel hair and wings extracted from Paul Klee, Angelus Novus painting (1920)

I interpreted the painting *Angelus Novus* as a web of lines, in many sources also described as “**a spidery hieroglyph(34)**”. Klee used different types of lines in the painting, as a straight and sharp angled geometrical wings or livelier, oval-shaped, curly Angel’s hair (Figure 4). His method of painting inspired me to work with line and shape in cinematic space. I started the design process with the idea to depict Miina’s past by curved lines and oval shapes, and the present life with straight and angular characteristics.



## VISUAL RESEARCH

Further on, in my visual research, I came across a close-up image of a spider's web with water drops illuminating light (Figure 5). This reference photo perfectly illustrated the interchange and transition between Miina's present life - straight, geometric lines, and past - curved, organic lines. I desired to achieve that transition in cinematic space. For example, in the nature locations, I searched for dark, diagonal lines of tree branches portraying Miina's young, strong dynamics and anger contrasted to green forest background that had emotional reference to relief from the painful experience. Along with the analysis of the spider's web, I observed that straight lines of the net were constructed from oval, soft, shimmering shapes of light accumulated in the water drops. The idea of distinguishing the past and the present period evolved towards merging curved lines of the past and straight of the present into one space and illustrating the coexistence of both inspired by the web image. I incorporated the accumulation of rounded water drops reflecting glimpses of light into dark, angular rock surface of the cave (Figure 6). The caves symbolized Miina's sightless period of life illuminated by circular forms that represented safe, calm characteristics of childhood.



Figure 5. Image of spider web with water drops.

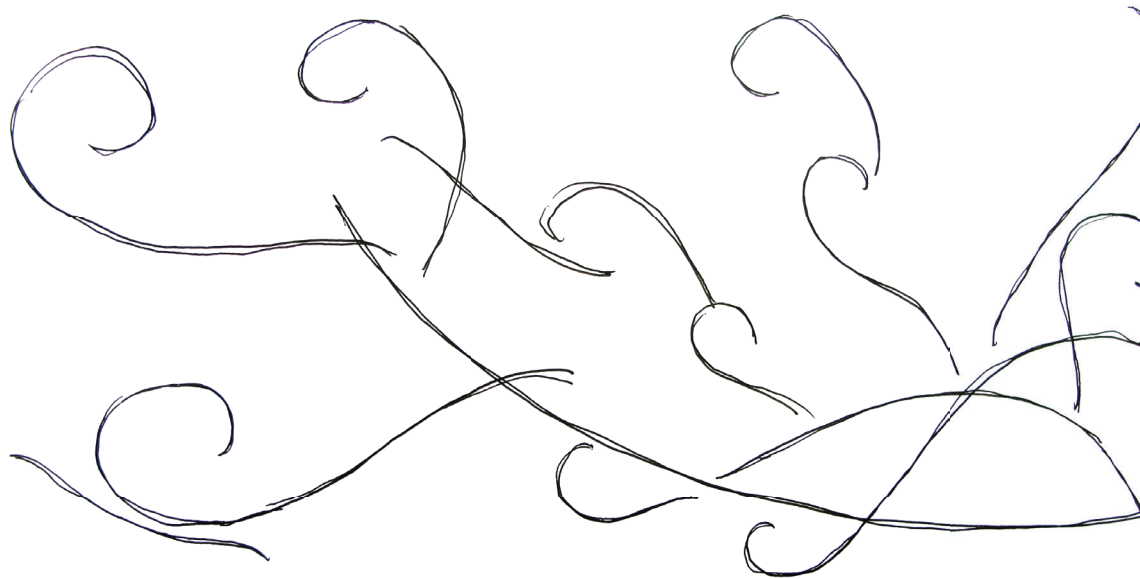
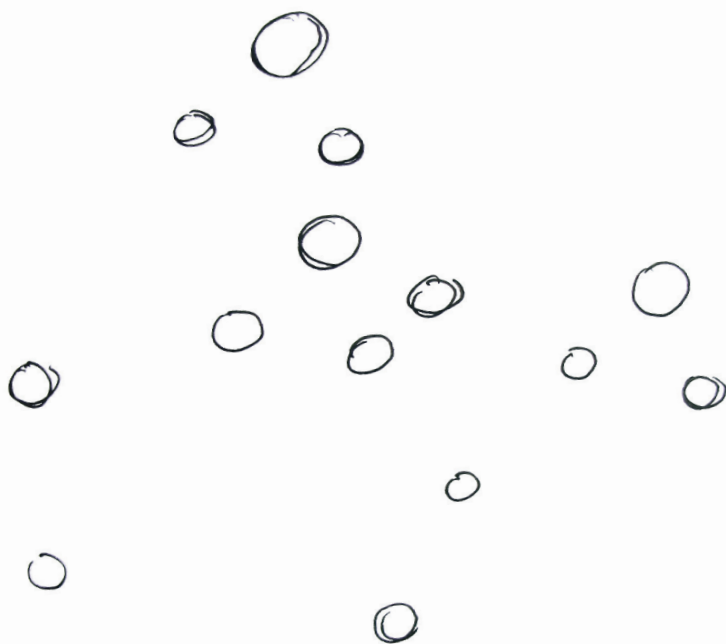
Author unknown.



Figure 6. Still from Awakening, Close-up of cave wall with water drops;

Still from Awakening, Long shot of diagonal branches in the forest





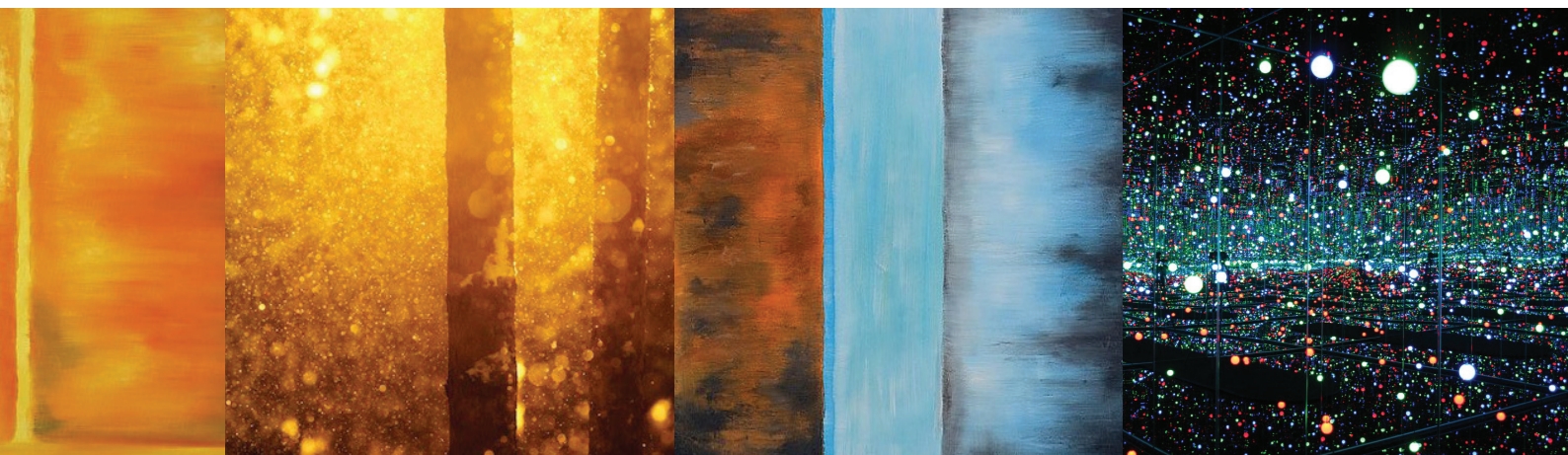
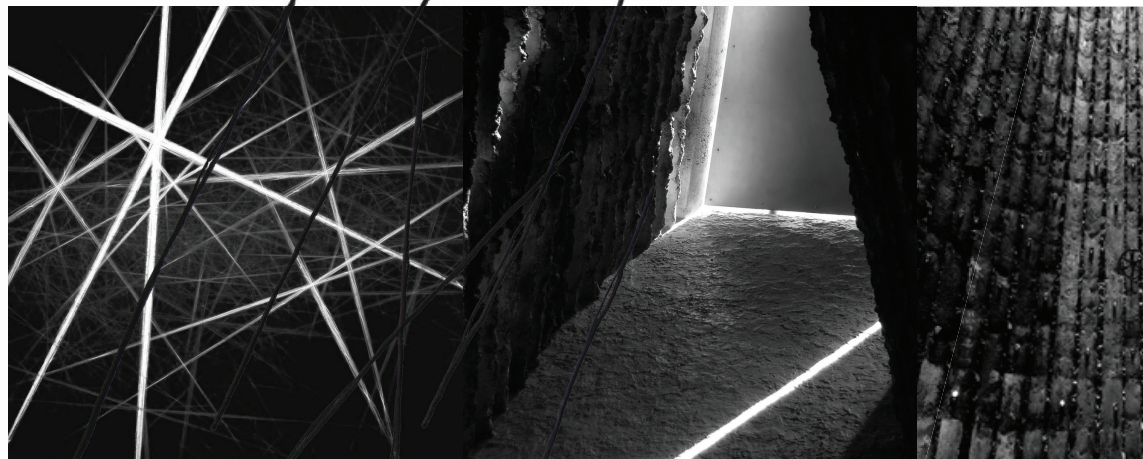


Figure 7. Image of forest with light illuminations, Author unknown; Mark Rothko , Image of forest with light illuminations, Author unknown; Yayoi Kusama Infinity mirrored room - The souls of millions light away

Additionally, I came across forest images of trees composed by straight lines of trunks contrasted with circular shapes of light and air (Figure 7). Composing a mood board for, I decided to connect those nature and light references with a dreamlike feeling from Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity mirrored room - The souls of millions light away* (Figure 6). Using infinite number of light particles accumulated in a physical space, Kusama portrayed the relationship between life and death, dream and nightmare(35). For me, the installation perfectly grasped the relation of human life and the world. It also corresponded to one of the key emotions in *Awakening*; the untouchable feeling of human existence.

Furthermore, Mark Rothko's abstract, minimalistic color paintings, based on elementary human emotions influenced the color representations in the *Awakening* cinematic space (Figure 7). Hues of cold blue and warm yellow were indication of Miina's present and past life. I did not specify exact color scheme for those periods, but the contrast of cold and warm palette in Rothko's paintings, the transition between hues was an interesting observation and I have desire to implement it to, Miina's visual environment.





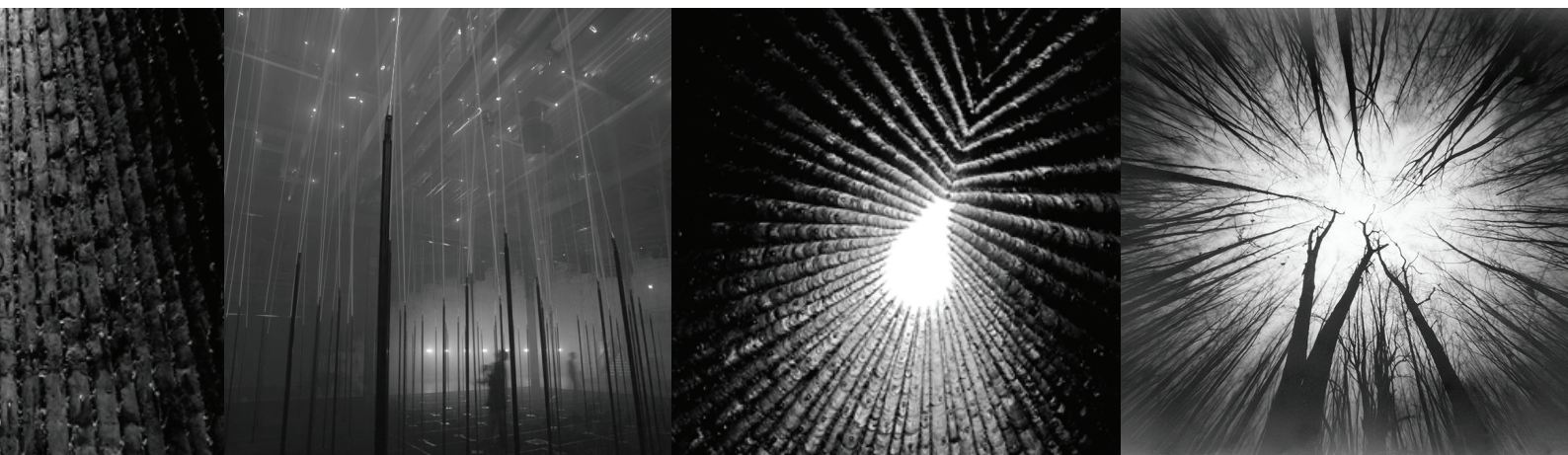


Figure 8. From the left-up: Image of diagonal white stripes, author unknown; Chapel of Brother Klaus Mechernich, Germany by Peter Zumthor, photo Helene Binet; Light Installation, Author unknown; Chapel of Brother Klaus Mechernich, Germany by Peter Zumthor, photo Helene Binet; Image of tree crown, Author unknown

Coming back to Miina's dark and rebellious teenage period, I composed a mood board portraying the relationship between straight, angular characteristics of architecture and nature. The photography of Bruder Claus Chapel in Germany, was a key reference that illustrated nature, as a linear imprint in the body of architectural space. The building technique, where tree trunks were casted in concrete and set on fire created vertical "ribs" in the walls of the Chapel (Figure 8), perfectly accompanied images of diagonal stripes, vertical "forest" of lights or sharp lines of a tree crown. My idea was to use common characteristics of architecture and nature, the angular relation between them, to express Miina's tension as well as her existential and spiritual conflict.

## LINE AND SHAPE IN SPACE

Coming back to Block reflection on visual components, I strongly agree upon his words, that:

**“ The actor communicates by talking, making facial expressions, and using body language, but an actor is also a combination of space, lines, shapes ... So, in that respect, there’s no difference between an actor and any other object(36). “**

## LINEAR MOTIF

Inspired by *Angelus Novus*, I conducted sketches of different types of lines that I interpreted from the painting (Figure 9).

Eventually, I created the linear concept of Miina’s space, where the past and the present time were constructed through a combination of circular, straight, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal lines considering the different characteristics associated to them. Block argues that it is possible to define the linear motive only on the flat, two-dimensional screen, not the line in physical space. The lines can be observed by the tonal contrast or eye squint on the screen(37). From architectural point of view, the human eye, while squint, can also perceive linear motive in real life. Therefore lines in cinematic space can be recognized and understood through three-dimensional space, not only as a flat lines on the screen.



Figure 9. Sketches of line and shapes inspired by Paul Klee, Angelus Novus painting (1920)

## STRAIGHT

To express the complexity of Miina's young life troubled with past memories I considered the orientation, direction and quality of lines. The line typology created contrast or affinity in cinematic space or between spaces(38). In *Awakening*, I used straight line as an emotional reference to the direct, powerful, rebel and teenage qualities in Miina. The strong dynamics of diagonal lines indicated Miina's anger, vertical lines were linked to faith and freedom and low dynamic of horizontal lines, communicated balance and peace (Figure 10).

For example, Miina's conflict, anger and internal dilemmas were emphasized by diagonal structure of the concrete bridge in the stream scene, the angular iron truss by the rail passage, the linear break in the concrete wall or the diagonal accumulation of dry branches in the forest (Figure 11, 12).



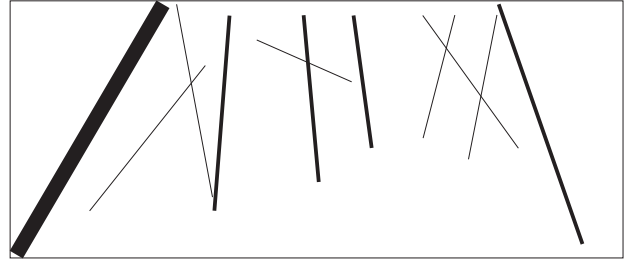


Figure 10. Linear sketches



Figure 11. Stills from *Awakening*, Close-up of Miina by the iron truss, Long shot of Miina going in to forest, diagonal trees.



Figure 12. Still from Awakening, Long shot of Miina by the rail passage, Medium shot of Miina by the stream

## CURVED

On the contrary curved lines were associated with the soft, organic, childhood faith and safe periods of Miina's life before her grandfathers death. Block writes that "line is the result of other visual components that allow us to perceive lines, but none of the lines we see is are real. Shape goes hand in hand with line, because all shapes appear to be constructed from lines."(14) In that way, curves created the round shimmering lights and oval shapes in cinematic space (Figure 13). There was an accumulation of spherical, elliptical props in Miina's room, like the angel snow ball with reflections of dotted light, the round aquarium with a flower, the globe lamp beside her bed, dotted, rounded pillows and other small objects on the shelf (Figure 14).



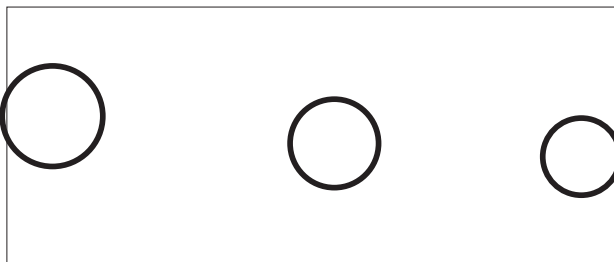
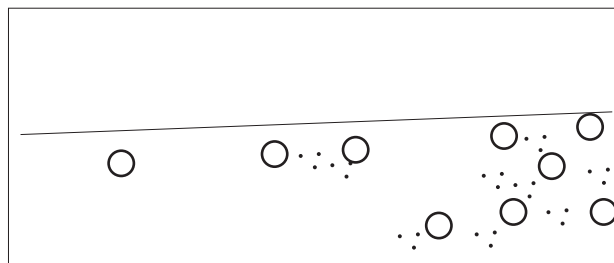
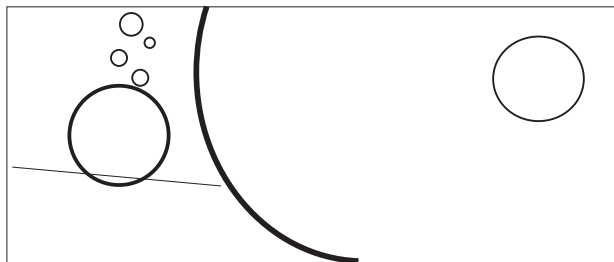


Figure 13. Linear sketches





Figure 14. Still from Awakening, Close - up of praying Miina in the room; Still from Awakening, Close-up of Angle painting and flower glass ball; Still from Awakening, Minna sleeping.



## FRAGILITY OF LIFE

The themes of **life and death** were central elements in the script of *Awakening*. At first these elements were supposed to be shown in a very concrete way portraying, for example, a funeral with an open coffin, but the film took a more poetic direction. Therefore these themes were portrayed in a more abstract style. For instance, the character's emotions and dramatic actions caused by death of a dear family member were symbolically expressed in the film as the destruction of the religious symbol, nightmares and crawling insects. This encouraged me to search for less direct ways to support the poetic feeling through the character of cinematic space.

I portrayed Miina's discoveries about living in the present moment, noticing the beauty of small fragile elements of life and her meditative state. Despite of the dark atmosphere in the script, I had the desire to focus on subtle nuances and express the **fragility of life** - Miina's grief.

Examples of these unique moments can be seen in the film when the flower in dark water brakes into an infinite number of particles (Figure 15), when Miina is standing by the river and a sudden gust of wind makes a rain of autumn leaves swirl all around her (Figure 16), as well as the spontaneous hail that rained over Miina lying in the forest and the tiny untouchable particles seen in the dark water resembling a micro-cosmos of life (Figure 17).

A correlation between architectural roughness in contrast to fragility and subtlety of nature elements, was brought forth by me to the director in the editing phase of *Awakening*. The director did not notice the value of unexpected rain and how it could contribute to the atmosphere and emotional content of the film image. Moreover, it was a force of nature, that created a relation between particles of hail and untouchable water particles from the flower scene. In this case the director of photography did not see the value of hail and the affinity to Miina's poetic environment.

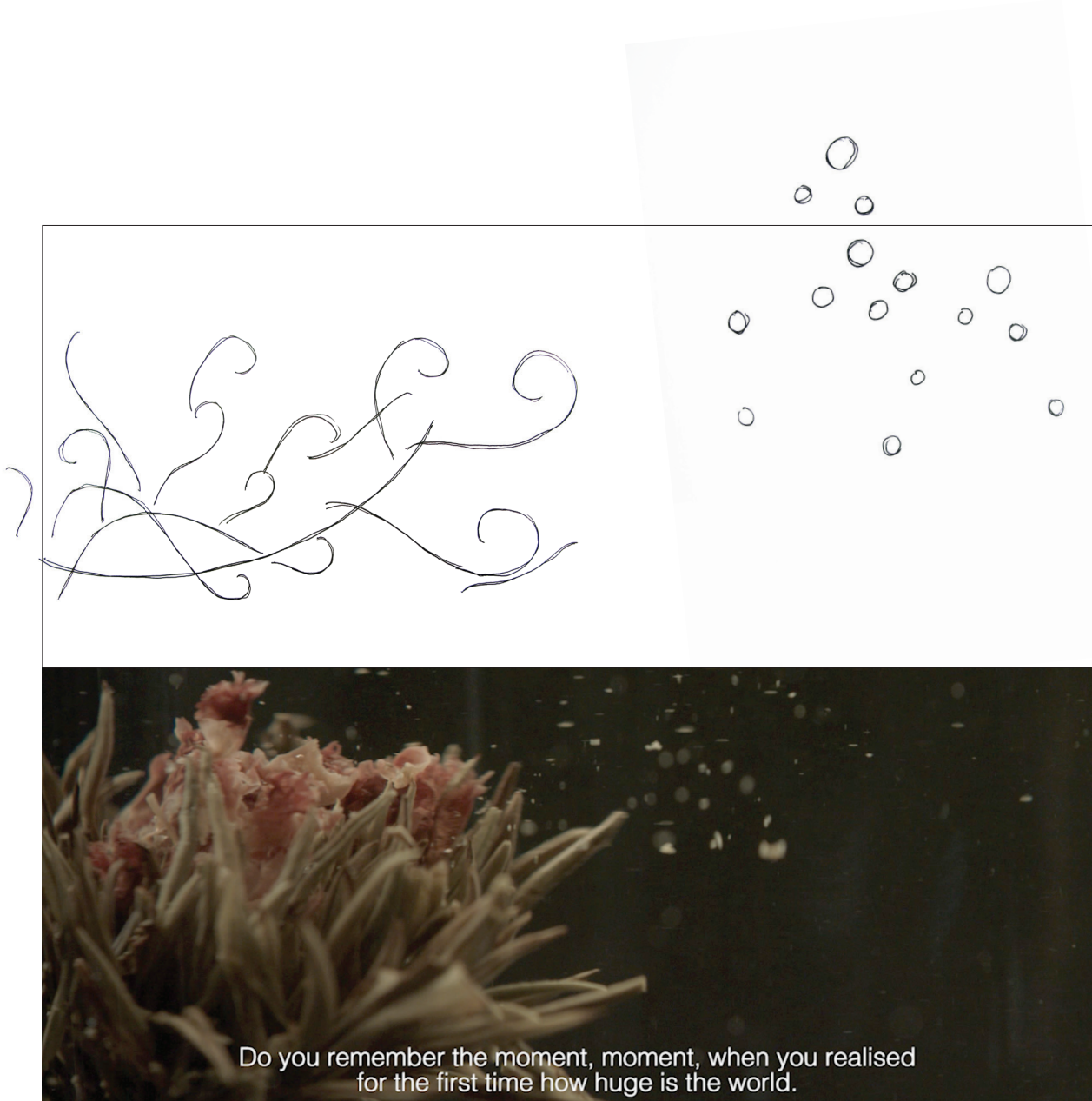


Figure 15. Linear sketch of “an angel hair” and corelation with *Awakening* scene



Figure 16. Still from Awakening, Close-up of water plant , Medium shot of Miina by the concrete bridge, surrounded by the rain of yellow leaves.



Figure 17. Still from Awakening, Close-up of air particles in the water; Still from Awakening, Close-up of Miina on the forest ground in raining hail.



## CIRCULAR AND ANGULAR SHAPES IN CINEMATIC SPACE

Returning to *Angelus Novus* battle described by Benjamin, I had the idea to illustrate the affinity between the angel wings and Miina's hands. The similar geometry and angularity of the wings with the close-up of hands, floating in the air portrayed the relationship between Miina's and the angel's struggle. In addition to the angular shapes, the circular point lights in the background of the scene were indicating soft characteristics associated with circular shape (Figure 19) and signifying positive change. For example, in the opening sequence (Figure 19) the red glowing circular light illumination, appears later in the wide shot of the rock concert (Figure 20) as an oval, delicate light forms. On the other hand, those shimmering lights are the opposite to angular forms in the childhood room, informing about a dramatic shift in Miina's life.

Moreover, in the dramatic scene of the burning cross, the close-up of the rounded form of Miina's eye reflects the angular form of religious symbol (Figure 21). The closing image mirrors angular tree crown of the forest in her eye and loops the circle of organic shapes in the cinematic space (Figure 22).



Figure 18. Still from Awakening, Snow ball and aquarium close-up; Still from Awakening, Long shot of Miina room



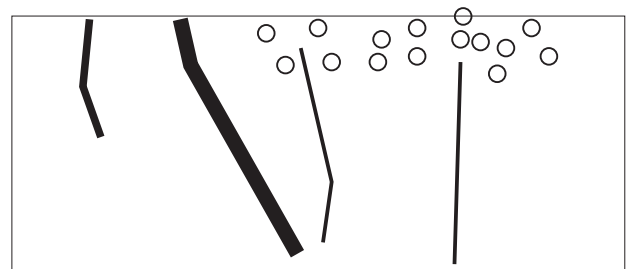
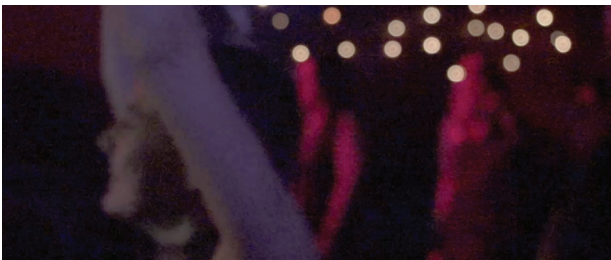
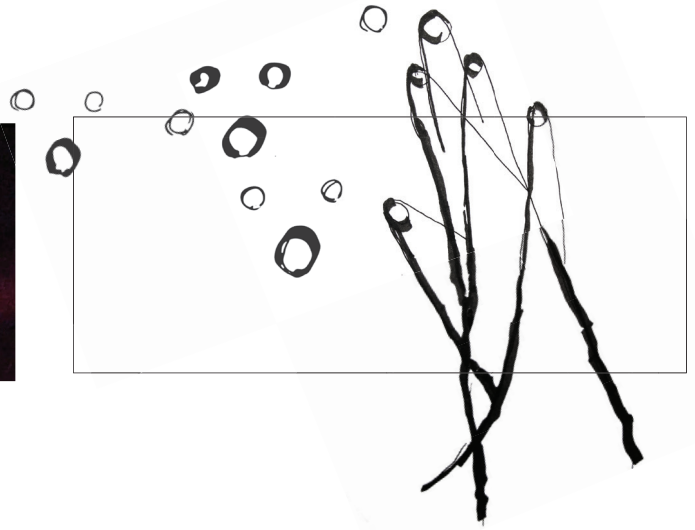


Figure 19. Linear sketches

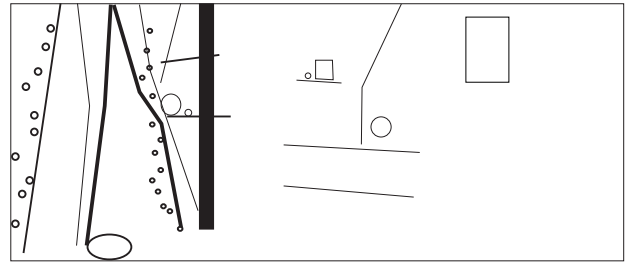




Figure 20. Still from Awakening, opening sequence, lights in the gig; Still from Awakening, Close-up of Miina dancing in the gig.



Figure 21. Still from Awakening, Close-up of burning cross reflection in Miina eyes;



Figure 22. Still from *Awakening*, Close-up of tree crown in Miina eye.



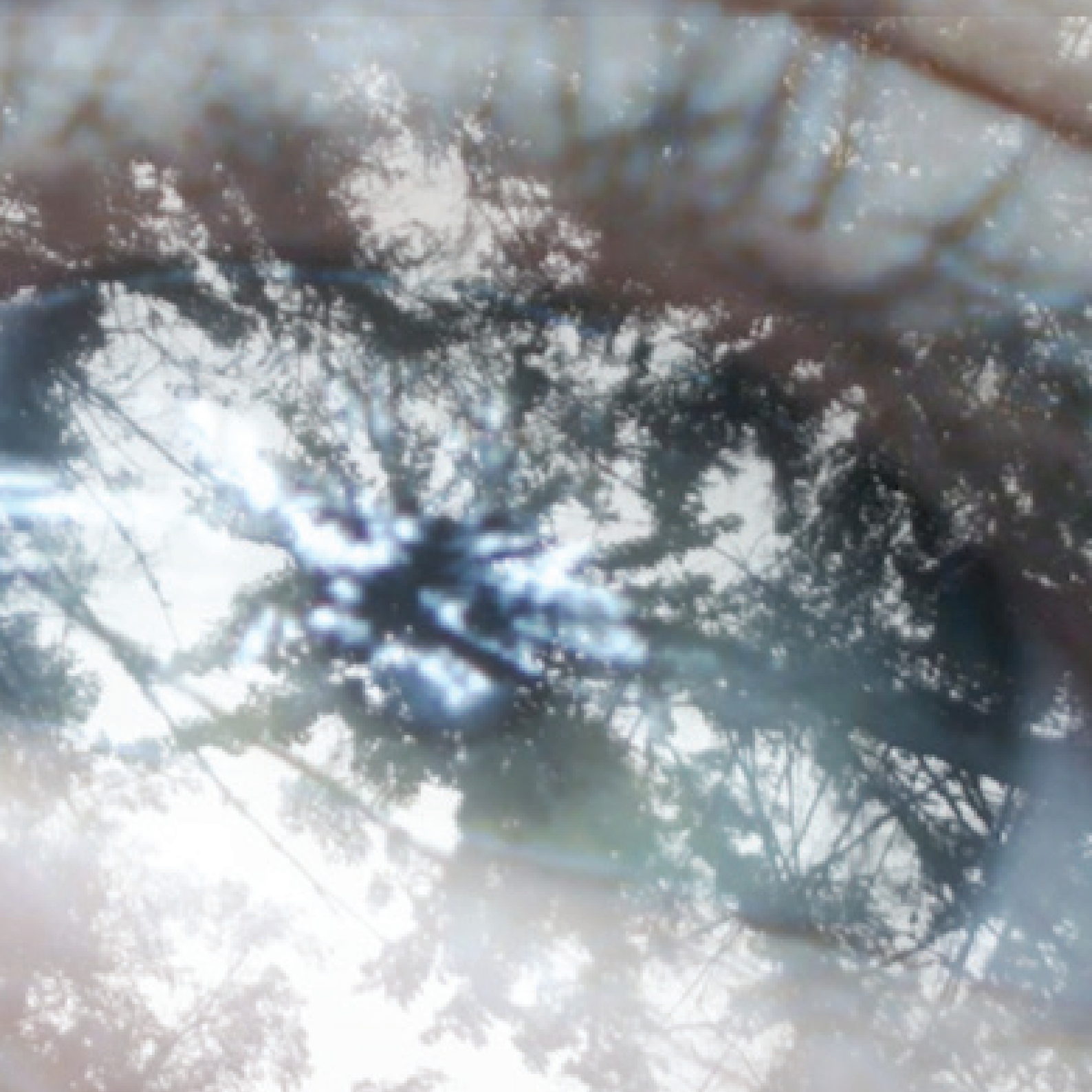




Figure 23. Sketch of relation between church arches and forest tree arches.

## DEPTH AND FLATNESS IN SPACE

In architecture and cinema, line exists only as a result of the way we perceive reality, and it is a basic element that creates perspective in space .

In this chapter, I focus on space typology, color, tones and textures in *Awakening*, including different characteristics that I associated with them. Those characteristics evolves manly from emotions identified with lines and shapes in cinematic space, discussed in previous chapter.



Figure 24. Still from Awakening, Long shot of Miina going in to forest, Vertical trees; Still from the church, location scouting,v main nave

## LINEAR PERSPECTIVE - DEEP SPACE

As was mentioned in previous chapter, the sound designer's idea about connecting acoustically nature and sacral architecture inspired me to search for design relations between the two locations. As Pennanen said in the interview, the forest was Miina's temple.

In the design for *Awakening* I desired to connect those two seemingly contrasting locations. The church as a human made space and nature, were both symbols of spirituality for Miina. On the other hand, it was the grandfather's funeral service in the church where Miina's faith crisis started along with internal fear and doubt. The forest appeared as a foreign and dark place at the beginning of the script, but eventually it was the nature where the resolution of the Miina's crisis took place. Keeping that note in mind I began to search for an affinity between the church and the forest.

For me, gothic architecture was a desired choice for the church style in *Awakening*, because of its strong linear and vertical attributes. Historically, gothic style was designed to draw human gaze to heaven. For me, the scale and the slim structure of gothic columns, vaults and openings perfectly reassembles the nature's design of the height of the trees in the forest (Figure 23). While standing in the main nave we perceive this sacral space as one point perspective, where all the columns are going towards one vanishing point. Also in cinema, perspective draws audience's attention and emphasizes the longitudinal surface(39). In *Awakening*, deep space and verticality in church represented faith and powerful, as well as spiritual emotions of Miina as a child.

Gothic is not a common style in Finland. Fortunately we founded 14th Century, three nave gothic stone church of St. Lawrence in Lohja, that served as architectural temple for z. Additionally, the mural series of the Last Judgment, on the church walls, were suitable for Miina's flashback scene with the wall paintings of hell.

Moreover, *Karkalin luonnonpuisto* (*Karkali Strict Nature Reserve*) in Lohja acquired suitable vertical and deep attributes for the forest location. The richness of flora, the variety of tree species created the perfect visual environment to represent stability and freedom, that Miina was gaining after her crisis of faith. These two architecturally different spaces created affinity in cinematic space.



## LINEAR PERSPECTIVE - MOVEMENT IN DEEP SPACE

Perspective was also implemented in the images of Miina's environment to contrast phases of her life. Miina's search for something solid, for something that would give her direction, is portrayed as a series of walks in deep space (Figure 25), because that space appears as most dynamic and intense.

For example, when the camera follows a character from the back with a dolly movement or when a character moves towards the camera from the back of the image. Movement in these cases is supporting the linear perspective(40). Miina passes through a horizontally aligned concrete rail passage, a tunnel with rectangular light opening, or while in the rock concert, three light-points give her journey a direction. Eventually she reaches the vertical forest, and when coming from the dark tunnel, her gaze is guided up to the sky.



Figure 25. Still from Awakening, Selections of shoots

## FRONTAL PERSPECTIVE - FLAT SPACE

Flat space contrasts deep space by definition stay in contrary to above representation. Frontal perspective was present in Miina's environment mainly in the moments of relief. The final scene portrays the character achieving balanced state and is located in flat space, because that space appears as most settle and calm (Figure 26).



Figure 26. Still from Awakening, Selections of shoots

## CLOSED SPACE - VISUAL CLAUSTROPHOBIA

The film's atmosphere was dominated by the feeling of anger and internal battle inside the a young mind, provoked by the religious traditions framing Miina's life. Her life was emotionally oppressed, contrasted by her need to rebel against the expectations of the religious community. Her longing for freedom and openness was a driving factor of the story. With regard to character's critical state, the director wanted to emphasize the feeling of claustrophobia in cinematic space.

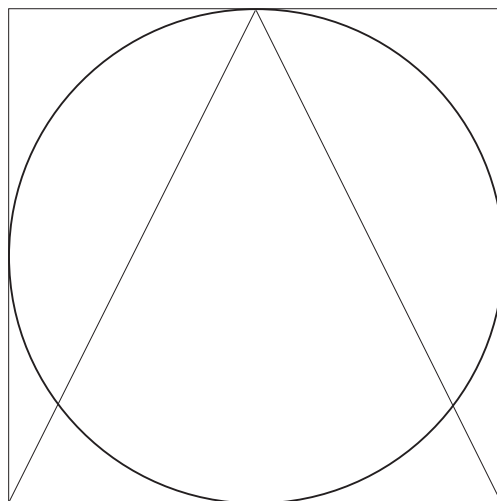
According to Block(41),the film frame is enough to visually close the space. However, horizontal and vertical lines can empower this framing. In order to express Miina's trapped feeling, I decided to use different types of lines and shapes to compose a closed space. I used lines and shapes to create a sense of depth in cinematic space, that served as an indication of the upcoming positive change in Miina's life (Figure 27).



Figure 27. Still from *Awakening*, Long shoot, Miina walking in the tunnel; Still from *Awakening*, Long shoot, Miina walking to the gig.

## SHAPE

In addition, Block points out that every complex object is constructed from basic shapes. For me, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, space can also be constructed from those elements. Therefore, every shape (and line) in cinematic space has the ability to evoke certain emotions and communicate them to the viewer. To underline several stages of claustrophobia in space, I used contrasting shapes. Triangle was the basic shape indicating the main character's conflict and disorientation. On the contrary, circular forms revealed romantic emotions and positive emotional change and created a maximal contrast between both shapes. The square represented emotional stability and solidity<sup>(42)</sup> (Figure 28).





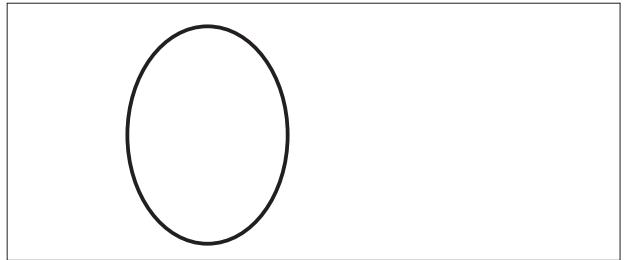
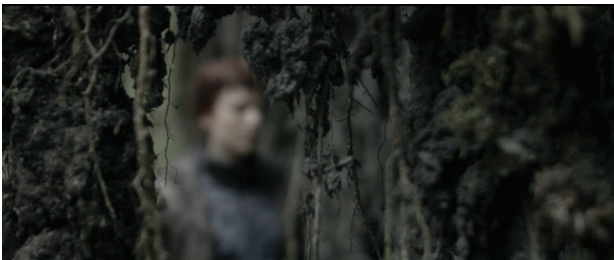
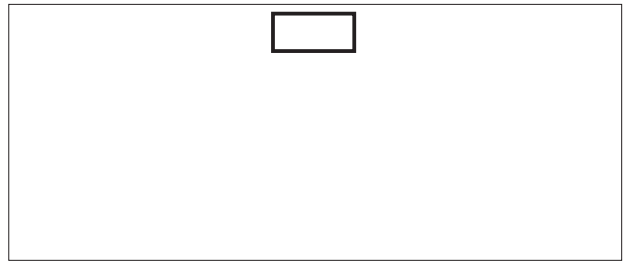
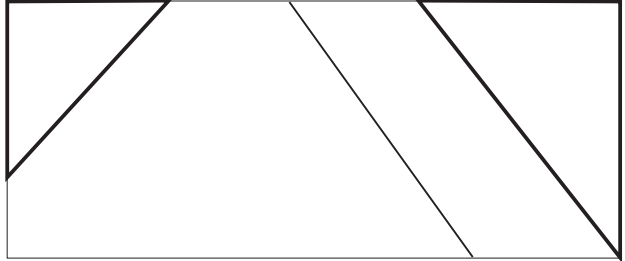


Figure 28. Linear sketches

## SURFACE DEIVISION

Pennanen admitted in the interview, that the lack of dialogue in the film gave an important role to the locations to communicate the emotions of the main character. According to her, it was possible to tell Miina's story through the cinematic space. The director mentioned, that she **"...wanted to find the visual connections in the space that could express Miina's nightmares, and on the other hand, to show through the space how she overcame her fears"**. There was a crucial scene in the film: when Miina is captured against a wall, full of soil and roots, symbolizing those nightmares and fears. The space was very murky, relating to darkness in the other spaces; tunnel, cave etc.

To achieve a strong emotional emphasis in the visual environment, Block suggests to use another visual element called surface division(43). Similarly to perspective, division can direct attention to specific place in the cinematic space. For this setting, I proposed to enhance the depth of the environment in order to create interaction between character and the organic surface. Through the semi-oval opening in dark root's surface, we could observe in a distance the bright face of Miina. There was a contrast between the character and the environment, until she started slowly getting to know her surrounding, touching the wall as another being: the skin of other character (Figure 30).

This interaction between character and visual environment is a prominent illustration where cinematic space is more than representations of emotions. The space in cinema on spatial occasions can actively generate emotional relationship with the character, and from architectural point of view that is fascinating. Pennanen underlines that her goal was to sensually connect the character and the visual environment. She was looking for the experience in space through sound, touch, and smell, that Miina will response too. This evidence grounds the idea that cinematic space is not only supporting the storytelling, but is guiding the viewer's emotional attention. Interestingly enough space in cinema can be a driving force that embraces and influences the emotional response of the character in the visual environment. In other words, it can influence the way the director understands and directs the actor to create character emotions in cinematic space.

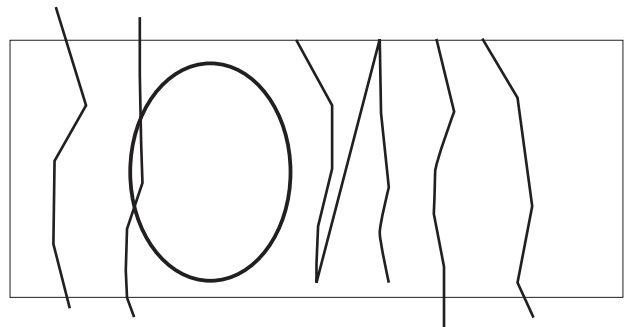
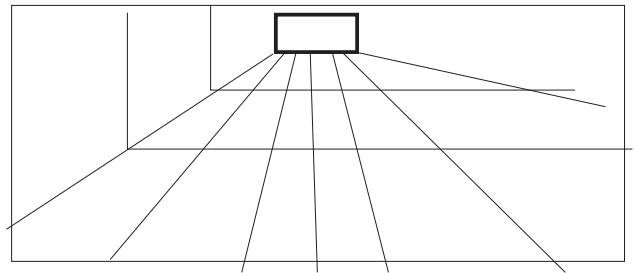
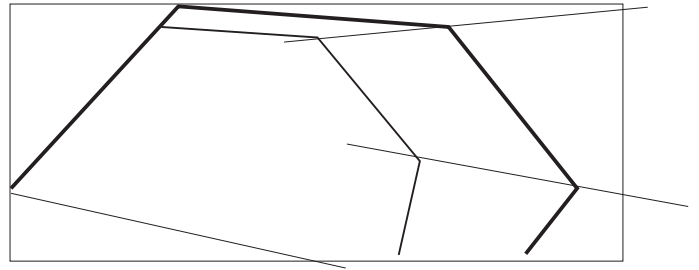


Figure 29. Linear sketches



Figure 30. Still from Awakening, Close-up of Miina touching the roots





Figure 30. Still from Awakening, Close-up of Miina touching the trees.



## AMBIGUOUS SPACE - ABSTRACT AND POETIC VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

As was pointed out in **The Script** sub-chapter, the final version of *Awakening* developed towards a more abstract and poetic cinematic language. The Benjamin's description of *Angelus Novus* struggle, together with the dream-like and nightmarish details of the strange flower suffocated under water and the crawling insects, communicated the internal emotions and the spiritual conflict, which Miina was going through. I appreciated the fact that the opening of the script did not reveal direct information about the character, nor about the religious background of her childhood. The Christian symbolism slowly entered the picture as the story developed and that gave me a possibility to portray Miina's spirituality in a more indirect way. Therefore, I decided to use ambiguous space to communicate spiritual tension and confusion of Miina's experience.

Ambiguous space(44) is a very interesting type of space from architectural point of view. It is a visual environment that is difficult to recognize in terms of scale and relation between a character/objects and space, and is only possible to decode when the movement appears.

Ambiguous space in *Awakening*, as a term is not strictly following Block's description, the movement is present in the frame, but the size and space are not clearly defined. In the film, ambiguous environment was mainly used to illustrate Miina's nightmares and her doubtful state. The story was told in thirty-two shots and half of them appeared as an ambiguous space. The viewer is exposed to images of different insects crawling, water plant/flower breaking in to millions particles floating in the air, details of soil and organic shapes of roots (Figure 31).

Another example of ambiguous space was Miina's childhood. In the editing phase of the film Pennanen decided to eliminate the long shots and the overall representation of the childhood room in deep space. She limited the childhood visual environment to ambiguous and flat spaces. That combination created contrast and emphasized uncertainty with calmness in order to touch the essence of the character's contradictory feelings.

According to Block, multiple perception of space is mostly used by filmmakers to underline the feeling of anxiety, tension or confusion and enhance particular atmosphere(45). It is very clear that Pennanen's choice of many ambiguous shots was a visual expression of the character's personal and internal struggle. In that way the claustrophobic images, dominated by dark light communicate the deepest spheres of Miina's mind.



Figure 31. Still from Awakening, Selections of shoots





## AREAL PERSPECTIVE - COLORS AND PATTERNS

Turning now to the last part, the role of colors and patterns in the cinematic space, I would like to mention shortly the natural colors of locations and then move to the design for Miina's childhood room.

The entire color palette of the film is mostly imposed by the location color scheme and the natural desaturated hues of blue and green of October and May in Finland. The character did not stand out from the environment; the costume design contributed to merging her appearance with the space itself.

In the script there was no specific indication how to portrait the childhood memories and Miina's teenager age. Eventually the cinematographer decided to visually distinguish Miina's childhood with soft focus lens, creating dreamy and blurry light feeling of the visual environment. Tynskä's approach and use of soft lens was not my favorite solution to indicate the childhood period. In my own opinion, soft focus lens has a tendency to blur the image and take interesting aspects out of it, such as depth, structure etc.

Nevertheless, due to time limitations, I tried to embrace that decision and work with different color palette and patterns to portrait the past and present time in less direct way, more detailed and interesting for the eye.

According to Block, every element or character in the visual environment possesses certain visual information like pattern, detail, color. Depending on the distance from the camera, each of those elements appears rich in information or not. This phenomenon from architectural point of view is related to the aerial perspective, mentioned in **Depth and Flatness** chapter, where elements with more visual information will appear closer to the viewer while with less visual information will make them distanced. The stronger the contrast between those in the level of that information, the more deeper the cinematic space becomes and the visual intensity raises(46).



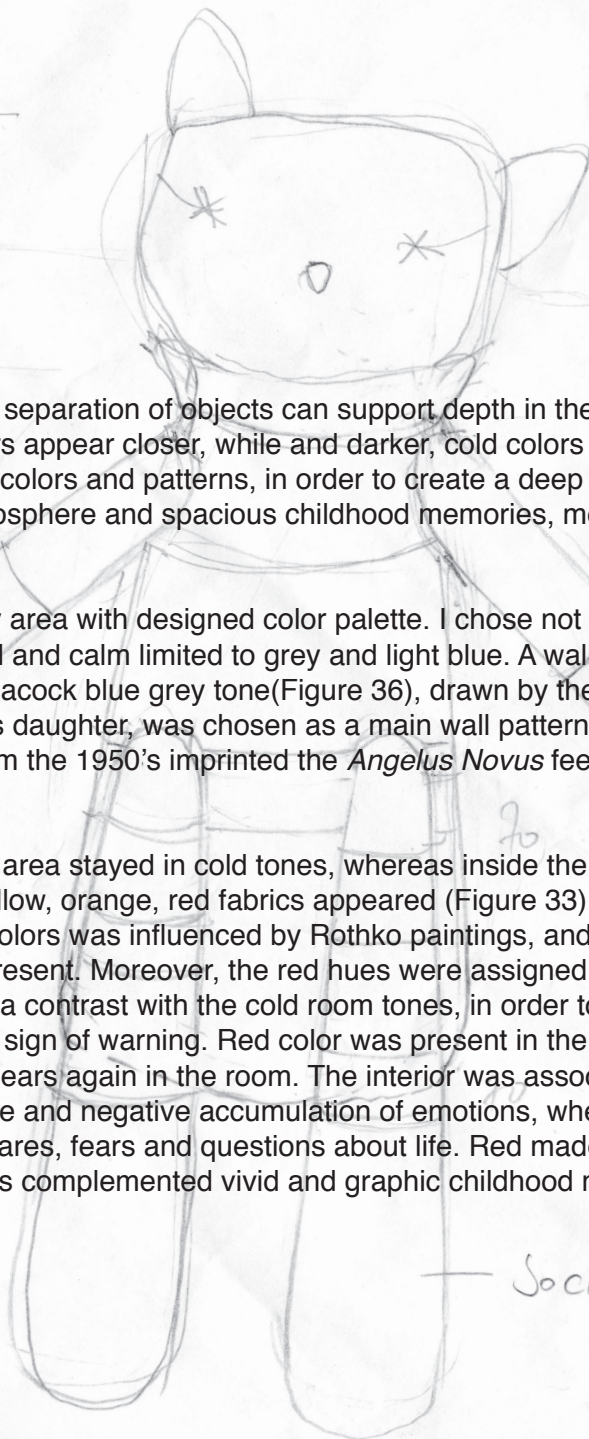


Figure 32. Miina's room. Set photo





Figure 33. Miina's room. Set photo



Moreover, tonal and color separation of objects can support depth in the visual environment, when brighter, warm colors appear closer, while and darker, cold colors further away(47). In the *Awakening*, I applied colors and patterns, in order to create a deep visual environment, to embrace the dreamy atmosphere and spacious childhood memories, mentioned in chapter **Space Atmosphere.**

Miina's room was the only area with designed color palette. I chose not to introduce new color hues; the palette was cold and calm limited to grey and light blue. A wall paper with a linear motive of an angel in a peacock blue grey tone(Figure 36), drawn by the child Maaria Wirkkala, a wall paper designer's daughter, was chosen as a main wall pattern. For me, the hand-made angel wallpaper from the 1950's imprinted the *Angelus Novus* feeling in the childhood space.

The background sleeping area stayed in cold tones, whereas inside the "blue tent" a structure a pile of saturated yellow, orange, red fabrics appeared (Figure 33). The transition between cold and warm colors was influenced by Rothko paintings, and it symbolized the intersection of past and present. Moreover, the red hues were assigned to few other props in Miina's room; they create a contrast with the cold room tones, in order to intensify the interior atmosphere, giving the sign of warning. Red color was present in the light flashes of the opening scene, and it appears again in the room. The interior was associated with Miina's childhood feelings, positive and negative accumulation of emotions, where the main character started to have nightmares, fears and questions about life. Red made the viewer alert and the different fabric patterns complemented vivid and graphic childhood memories.





Figure 34. Miina's room. Set photo



Figure 35. Miina's room. Set photo; Cat mascot, designed for Miina room



# CONCLUSION

By analyzing the creative process of designing *Awakening*, I have attempted to demonstrate that deliberate choices contributed to the creation of specific architectural and natural spaces that have the potential to communicate to the viewer certain desired feelings, reflecting the character's emotions and moods. Space in cinema is a powerful tool, able to convey feelings. It can even perform as a full-fledged character and turn into a fascinating platform for an architect to explore it, in terms of human relationship with the built and natural environments.

In the production design for *Awakening* I used space to tell Miina's story, and more specifically, visually interpreting and representing the character's emotions, embodied in the cinematic space. This visual environment created a film image that had the potential to impact the viewer emotionally.

While working on the design for the film, and then retrospectively analyzing my design process through incorporating Block's theoretical writings on cinematic space, I have made conclusions that could be useful for the future work on cinematic space.

This study has shown that cinematic space is one of the most important elements in production design and film. It serves as a visual environment for film visuals composed by line, shape, color, pattern and other visual elements. Moreover, it is the environment in which visuals, sound and story elements compose the film image. Cinematic space turns to be superior to these elements, especially in *Awakening*.

In my aim to convey the emotions of the main character and the specific atmosphere, both composed from intentionally chosen or designed cinematic spaces, I took several steps. Firstly, I decoded and interpreted the emotions from the film script. This material provided clues and instructions for the cinematic space. In addition to the script, key visual references served as a source of inspiration. For example, I interpreted Klee's painting, *Angelus Novus* and created a collection of visual elements, such as lines and shapes. Those basic elements in the visual environment, carried emotional content and experience of the film character throughout the film's image.

Secondly, I associated the different cinematic spaces with a special vocabulary of certain ways of using lines, shapes, perspective, color and patterns, in order to convey the various emotions and distinctive atmospheres. Miina's childhood space was mostly composed by oval and soft lines and presence of warm hues, while the space from her adulthood stayed in opposition, represented by cold, natural hues and more dynamic, diagonal lines and deep spaces.

In this work I understood how important and useful it is to follow Block's suggestion and set the "visual rules". By analysing the film's material and requirements, I have created a system of making film space meet those requirements. Not only did those rules lead to successful design and choice of spaces, but contributed to the shaping of the film's emotional content.

Furthermore, this experiment led me to new ways of space expression. The system and the rules I created and used were based on my architectural experience and reflected disagreement with Block on certain theoretic points. Thus my system was authentic and has potential to nourish further discussions on the topic among production designers and film practitioners.

Additionally, the selected existing spaces and designed cinematic spaces had impact on the creative team during the shooting. The possible interaction between the film character and the visual environment catalyzed new, unpredicted emotional responses, and guided the director through the shooting, rather than letting her to control the visual environment by following the initial plan. Also, it is important to remain open for accidental discoveries while working with cinematic space. For example, the force of nature can contribute to the emotions and poetry of visual environment when its visual value can be recognized on time.

The final design result is a convincing collection of natural and architectural spaces that reinforce and deliver the emotional narrative as much as the character. The visual environment in this work is vital to the narrative of the film.

These design discoveries were a revelation to me and brought a new perspective to my thinking on cinematic and architectural space. The overall experience with production design for *Awakening* will definitely affect my design work as an architect in the future and I feel it offers me a way to think outside the traditional methods and design frames when working with physical space in architecture, as well as embracing the power of cinematic space in my future film design.

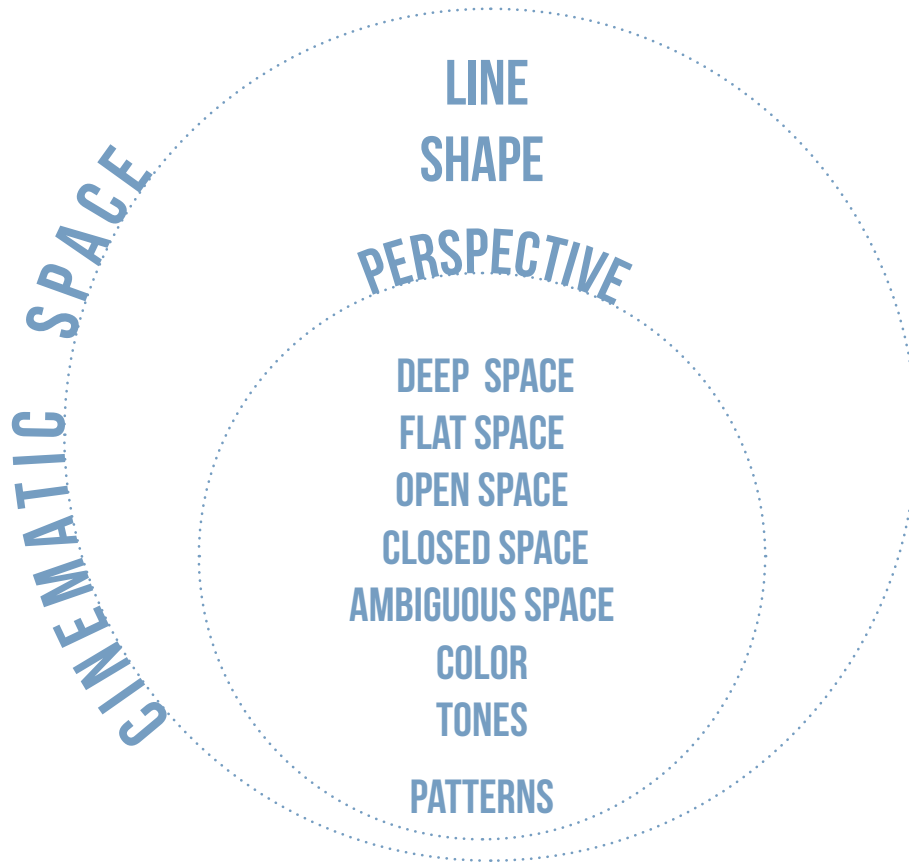
# BLOCK'S VISUAL ELEMENTS

( SELECTED )

SPACE  
LINE  
SHAPE  
TONE  
COLOR  
MOEVEMENT



# JOANNA'S VISUALS



# BLOCK'S VISUAL STRUCTURE

VISUAL ELEMENTS + STORY + SOUND

=

FILM IMAGE

# JOANNA'S VISUAL STRUCTURE

CINEMATIC SPACE  
IS A



# APPENDIX

## **APPENDIX 1: Factual data**

Title: Kirkastus / Awakening

Genre: short experimental film

Shooting format: digital, 4K w. Black Magic / DCP / 5.1, Color

Length: 12 min

Aspect ratio: N/A 2,40:1

Year: 2015

Budget: 15 000 EUR

CREATIVE TEAM:

Director: Moona Pennanen

Director of Photography: Markus Tynskä

Set Designer: Joanna Wojciechowicz

Costume Designer: Maria Rosenqvist

Sound Director: Meri Tikkala

Editor: Helis Hirve

Producer: Helen Vinogradov

PRE-PRODUCTION: 06-09.2014

SHOOTING DAYS: 30.09, 6-12.10.2014,  
estimated additional shooting 5.01.2015



## **APPENDIX 2: Synopsis**

Something isn't quite right with Miina in her young life. Series of nightmares and memories from the past can't let her forget about death of beloved granddad. In such a young age she questions life and death, faith and lack of believe, God and no God. Her only chance to fight the old memories is to look inside herself and search for her own holy experience.

Miina is eighteenth year , she goes to different places around her home town. One time she is in punk club, dancing, another time in forest cave trying to sense the coldness and darkness of the place. In her nightmares she sees dark forests, insects, glimpses of her childhood room and then funeral. She starts to talk about her experience with God, in the same time doubting about his presence and power.

Twelve years ago, Miina believed that God exists. Unfortunately her experience as a 6 years old, while witnessing the burring of her grandfather, made her realize that life has an end. Since that moment fear and doubt start to appear in her young mind. She buries her favorite doll in the garden and follows her mother wherever she goes. Little Miina prays, but after her traumatic experience the dialog with God is full of anxiety. She is recalling the hell painting from the town church and worries about her own life and future. To comfort her little daughter, mom buys her an angel painting and hangs it above Miina's bed.

The time passes, Miina is a teenager, but her mind is occupied with past experiences. The fear is replaced with anger and crisis in faith. She imagines herself standing in the middle of a field and watching a burning cross. The teenager Miina wonders around her town, mostly in remote areas. She takes a bus trips to the stream and the forest. In those secret places she starts an internal conversation, recalling how it was easy to believe when she was a child. She confesses the lack of strength in her life without faith, but at the same time she is not sure about God's presence.

After several trips in nature, Miina eventually finds the strength she misses and admits that the ideal childhood faith wasn't that honest and pure as she imagined. She discovers that real spirituality is around her in small details and little moments. She enjoys the dance in a club as an expression of freedom and joy of life. The eighteen years old Miina is able to communicate with God without the past anger. It is a forest altar where she has the final talk with Him and where she realizes that all she needs to believe in is inside her.

### **APPENDIX 3: Producer comments**

“Kirkastus” is a short fiction film, which is based on Mika Pekkola’s book “Aamun kirkastus” published in 2012 and told in a visually engaging way through black and white imagery.

“Kirkastus” looks at the themes of love, hate and revenge through a young girl Saara, who is from a closed community and faces her questions-answers on the very essential level of being.

Stories that young film makers all around the world keep (re)telling are simply put love, hate and revenge. Either the topic is revealed through self-search, utopia worlds or first loves - all these three topics also come together in “Kirkastus”. The fact that the topics of love, hate and revenge are being told over and over again throughout the history of film by both younger and older film makers is not a sign of lack of ideas, but the very simple human reality, that these are the topics that touch and matter and need to be told.

Looking at the trends of short films programming in the world, thousands and thousands of similar stories reach festival programmers each year. Few of those will survive, get programmed and fulfill its goals – reach audiences. We see the potential of “Kirkastus” as a visually different and memorable, story-wise philosophical and thoughtful audiovisual piece, which will not find its place amongst mainstream audiences, but will definitely make its way to the audiences valuing films with high artistic value and intellectually thoughtful content.

Further development work is planned through January and February of 2014 with further analysis on target audience, festival’s strategy etc – all that will be delivered further on after the development of the film has reached a later stage. For the same reason, the budget of the film is currently set to an estimation of 15 000 EUR. Many things still need to be discussed within the development phase to enrich the storyline and the theme of the film, bring stronger layers to it and to be able to propose a working budget to the school. Estimated time of first breakdown and working budget is set to January 2014 along with first script.

- Helen Vinogradov, 2014

## **APPENDIX 4: Director's vision**

The idea to make this film first came to me from the desire to investigate religious experience in today's world. More and more people are flooding away from the church and the scientific-rational explanation is coming more popular. Same time, the number of smaller religious communities has increased significantly during the past few decades. Is religion or faith useless concept in a secularized world or do we still have the need to believe in something higher than us ourselves, something which can't be proven with scientific methods?

These are the more general questions in the background of Awakening, but what I started to work on was my thoughts in a form of an essay film, stemming from my own experience as a child and as a young adult. At first I tried to approach my film as a fiction but after awhile I found out that I tried to hide my voice as a director in the layers of fiction, not trusting it enough to carry through the film.

After working with the topic for a while, I still find it quite embarrassing to make a film about my personal experience, but also feel that making an honest and vulnerable content out there, will also reach and talk to audiences.

I think Awakening is an honest essay what it's like to grow up as a child and the mixed feelings you face as a young adult because of your past experiences and the surrounding you grow up in. The film is mostly about the feeling of fear the first time a child comes to grasp what death means and the need to believe, to make sense of it. It's also about the difficulty to have faith when the rational and material life surrounds you, none of your friends share your views and the fear of being judged.

The film is based on a voice-over. It has two time-layers: one of childhood, a girl aged 6, and the other an adult self, early 20's. The scenes are re-created as in fiction but they have documentary autobiographical background. It's a three-act film: the first being about the childhood fear of dying, seeing nightmares and going to hell. The adult girl opens the film addressing an unknown person (the audience), who could be a close friend she is telling her story. The second part is the young adult trying to find her own way and her reflections about her childhood and how easy it was to believe back then when she didn't have the rational and skeptical questioning.

The third part is about the difficulty to believe when you pray and don't get any answers.

Awakening is collage-like film with archive material, nature imagery and re-created scenes. Generally it's about a girl who tries to seek for her own holy experience without the burden of religious institutions and her difficulty to say "I believe".

- Moona Pennanen, 2015

## **APPENDIX 5: An interview with Awakening director**

How do you associate different locations with emotional state of the character in Awakening?  
What is important for you as a director when deciding the location?

I think the locations are really important in terms of the emotional state of the character. Because there's no dialogue and the space gives more context, subtext and meaning to the story. When the main character is searching herself I wanted to get more closed-up spaces, industrial and bleak and use the space in a more claustrophobic way like she's trapped in the space (the tunnel, the bridge). In nature there are more open spaces, space to breath and feel and be more free or taking steps to be free. The forest is her temple. I wanted to also find the associations/visual connections with the spaces, for example nightmare and coming to terms with the nightmare (touching the roots)

Does location, space influence your way of directing, the way you want to express the story in Awakening?

Although making a fiction styled film I feel like my ideas and inspiration come from experiencing the space and observing people. I think many of the shots were determined by location, it gave us ideas what could the main character do there, how could she observe the space. I think some of the feelings she had were stemming from the location. My directing goal was to get the main character to listen the space, feel the space, touch the space like it was another person, another actor perhaps. I like the spaces to be also ambivalent not just representing only one thing.

What you expect in terms of storytelling form set design, as a director?

I think this is a bit difficult question. I guess to understand where the character/s are coming from, what is their emotional setting, how could the space/location support that/or be in



contrast to that. Also what subtext, context the space or little details can give which isn't maybe obvious in the first view and sometimes even ambivalent. I think what the location is and how it is shot etc is equally as important as the characters. For that reason I value set designing a lot. Sometimes a space can also be a character. I think most of all I expect authenticity from the set design whether it is an époque or documentary film.

Why did you decide in post production to limit space representation of Miina's childhood to close-up shoots. Why is there no actual space of her childhood, only details and the exterior of the house? How did those decisions support the story from your perspective?

I felt that the details describe more how she is, it wasn't necessary to show the space. I also felt that the wider shots of the room were too fairytale like, I felt they were distracting from who she is to what this space is.

Can you give example how( the qualities of space/location) and when space is a character for you as a director?

I think it's mostly in nature, specially when she's feeling nature, being united with it. For example when she's touching the fallen tree's roots and when she's laying on the ground.

Did you feel in Awakening that space, location started to play as a character?

I feel so yes, I think again it's mostly forest for me not so much other locations because we don't see them as much and she's not interacting with the other places

- Moona Pennanen, 2015

## NOTES

(1) physical space refers to space in real life, the unlimited three-dimensional expanse in which all material objects are located. source:<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Physical+space>

(2) Block p.2

(3) Block p.4

(4) Block p.4

(5) As objects become more distant they appear smaller because their visual angle decreases. The visual angle of an object is the angle subtended at the eye by a triangle with the object at its base. The greater the distance of the object from the eye, the greater is the height of this triangle, and the less the visual angle.

(6) Frontal perspective is a presence of a centralized, forward-facing object

(7) Aerial perspective or atmospheric perspective refers to the effect the atmosphere has on the appearance of an object as it is viewed from a distance. As the distance between an object and a viewer increases, the contrast between the object and its background decreases, and the contrast of any markings or details within the object also decreases.

(8) -

(9) Block p.2

(10) Block p.11

(11) Block p.114

(12) Andre Bazin (Bordwell 2001b, p.159)

(13) Block p.8

(14) Tom Dyckhoff Secret life of Building 2011, Chanel 4, TV series

(15) Interview on Secret life of Building 2011, Chanel 4, TV series by Tom Dyckhoff

(16) Pallasma, The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses

(17) Pallasma, The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses

(18) The Architecture of Image - existential space in cinema, Pallasmaa 2001,

(19) Tarkovsky

(20) Pallasma, The Architecture of Image - existential space in cinema

(21) Zumthor, Atmospheres

- (22) Zumthor ,Atmospheres
- (23) Zumthor(Thinking Architecture, 2006)
- (24) Zumthor , Atmospheres
- (25) List of architecture film festivals [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_architecture\\_film\\_festivals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_architecture_film_festivals)
- (26) <http://cafx.dk/>
- (27) Human Scale 2011, Jahn Ghel
- (28) Insitu 2011, Antoine Viviani
- (29) Block p.71
- (30) Block p.14
- (31) Block p.4
- (32) Quote by Benjamin 1955, cited in Prologue of Awakening (Pennanen, 2015)
- (33) Excerpt from Theses on the Philosophy of History (Benjamin 1955, p.257
- (34) This description appears in the relation to Klee's art e.g source: [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Paul\\_KleeLegacy](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Paul_KleeLegacy), 5 Th. row
- (35) BOMB - Artists in Conversation, Yayoi Kusama by Grady T. Turner <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2192/>
- (36) Block, p.3
- (37) Block, p.97
- (38) Block, p.106
- (39) Block, p.17
- (40) Block, p.28
- (41) Block, p. 47
- (42) Block, p.111
- (43) Block, p. 66
- (44) Block, p. 57
- (45) Block p. 57
- (46) Block p. 34
- (47) Block p. 35

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*Stalker* (1982) Andrey Tarkovsky

*Secret life of Building* (2011) Tom Dyckhoff, Chanel 4

*INSITU* (2011), Antoine Viviani

## IMAGES

p.12 Casa Malaparte source: <http://www.themodernhouse.com/journal/house-of-the-week-casa-malaparte-capri/>

p. 21 Still from *Stalker* (1982) source: <http://weirdfictionreview.com/2013/07/in-the-zone-an-excursion-into-andrei-tarkovskys-film-stalker/>







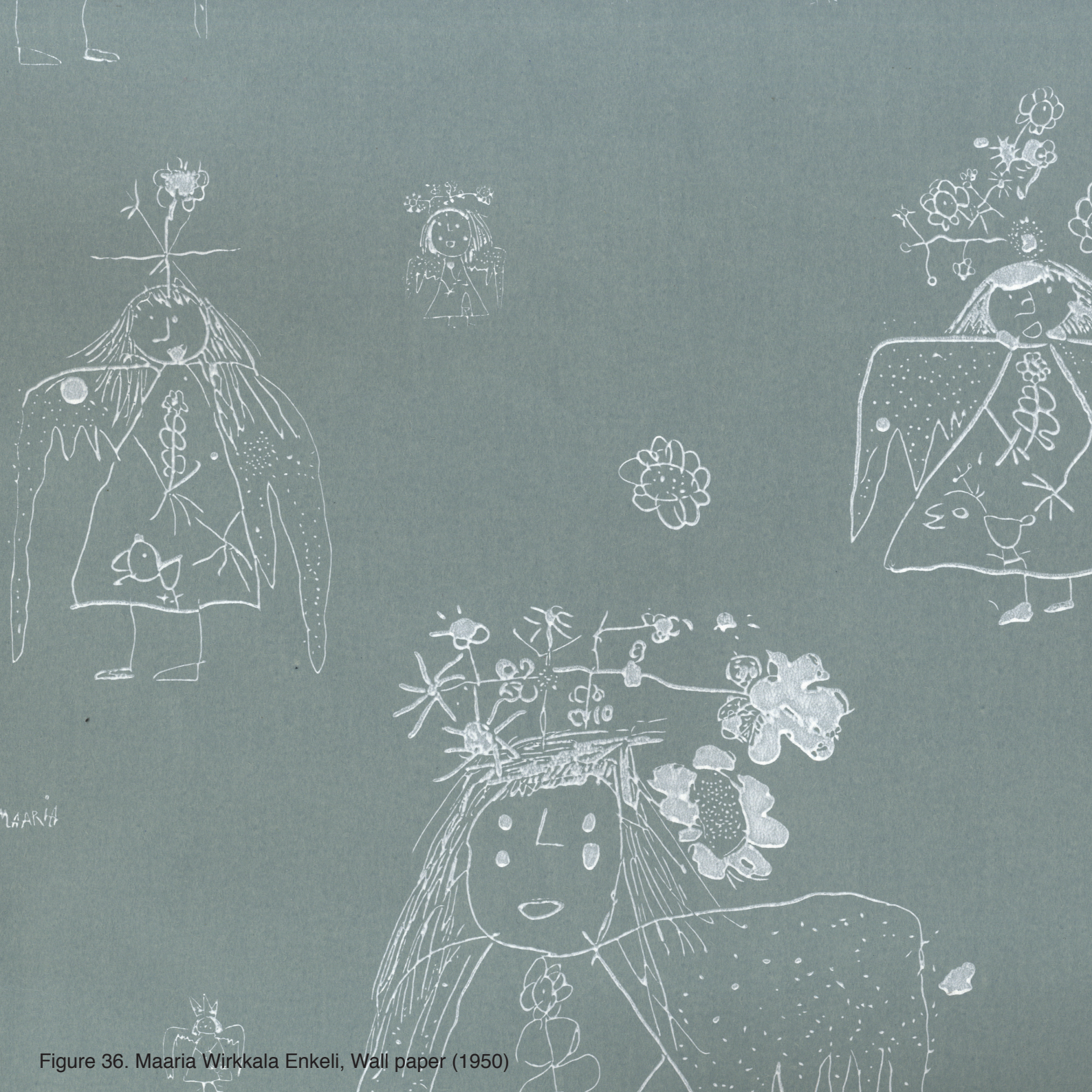


Figure 36. Maaria Wirkkala Enkeli, Wall paper (1950)



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